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ADELAIDE LINDSAY.

A NOVEL.

EDITED BY

THE AUTHOR OF "EMILIA WYNDHAM,"

"TWO OLD MEN'S TALES,"

ETC. ETC.

Queste miei carte in lieta fronte accoglie,
Che quasi in voto à te, sacrate i'porto.

TASSO.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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ADELAIDE LINDSAY.

CHAPTER I.

THE next morning Clara was pronounced out of danger by the doctor, who came early to see her; but it was thought most prudent to keep her in ignorance of her father's arrival, and of course of her little sister's death, till she had regained a little strength. It was not, therefore, till the third day after that fatal event, that Sir Thomas was

brought again to her bed-side. The meeting was a very affecting one, and the little one seemed almost beside herself with joy. One of her first inquiries was for Thekla: it was not difficult to deceive one so young into the belief that she was as well as could be wished, and to frame some excuse for the sisters being still kept apart; nor did the seriousness of her mother's manner surprise her, so habitual was it. Not so her increased affection for herself: this she seemed as if she hardly dare believe, and the surprise which was apparent in every feature at any unusual mark of affectionate interest, was felt by Lady Kynnaston as a more severe rebuke than hours of reproaches.

When the funeral was over, and the body

of her child was consigned to the keeping of the lonely grave, Lady Kynnaston thought it no longer right to conceal from Clara what she had lost.

Bitter was the poor child's grief when her mother explained to her that she would not, in this world, see her little playmate more—never more!

Never!—what a word is that! How difficult to conceive! That alone might teach us the truth of a living eternity, the *ever life!*

Lady Kynnaston endeavoured with the most soothing words to console the weeping child, while her own tears fell fast. It seemed as if the grief they mutually felt exercised a sympathetic influence upon both mother and child, and drew their hearts

together, for their affection seemed to increase day by day.

Sorrow had indeed in this case worked its beneficent effect. It was touching to witness the almost deprecating manner of Geraldine to her husband; as if every word, every action would ask pardon for the pain she had caused him for so many years: while he appeared ineffably happy at having at last acquired an affection which he had sought so long in vain. Geraldine seemed to consider her darling Thekla's death as a chastisement she had fully deserved, and she bowed her head with submission to the rod. She made every effort to bear her loss with resignation, and to endeavour to atone for her former misconduct by making her husband's home as happy as she could,

now that he had once more returned to it, forgiving her all the past.

Sir Thomas had begged Latimer not to leave them before the funeral was over ; but he could not be persuaded to prolong his stay after that ceremony ; he felt that his friend should be left in the undisturbed enjoyment of his newly found felicity, and he accordingly made up his mind to leave the Isle of Wight on the following Friday, and proceed to Bury Hill, where he was invited to finish the vacation.

Should he speak to Adelaide before he left ? This was a question which he revolved every night in his own mind ; and every night determined that the next day should be the last of his uncertainty : then he would arrange in thought how he would

address her, all that he would say: she would not, she could not refuse to listen to him; for why should he doubt her regard? It was impossible that she could retain any affection for Captain Mostyn. Did not what she had said the other evening infer as much? And if her affections *were* disengaged, why should she not love *him*? And then delightful hope whispered to his mind, that perhaps she was not indifferent to him; and he would recall, and gloat, as it were in fancy, over some little incident of the past day, which, though so trivial in itself, might betoken some warmer feeling than regard. And so he would fall asleep.

The next morning he would awaken in quite a different frame of mind. If *for* argued with him at night, *against* spoke

most convincingly at daylight; advising him to wait—lest he should lose all his chance by being too premature. That which had appeared to him in the night such a convincing proof of attachment to him was now nothing! a mere trifle! Of course she had seemed sorry when she heard that he was going. How could she have acted otherwise? Politeness alone would have induced her to express regret. Besides, no doubt she would miss him, were it only as a companion in her walks. How could he have been so conceited as to suppose that her manner bore any deeper meaning?

And then, quite in a rage with himself for being such a fool, he would finish dressing, and leave his room quite decided upon leaving her in ignorance of his feelings, if

she had not already discovered them for herself. How seldom do we act upon the plans and resolutions of the night!

Friday came, and the hour appointed for his departure. Latimer, after taking leave of Sir Thomas and his lady, went in search of Adelaide, who was, as usual at this time of the morning, in the school-room with her solitary pupil; for the lessons had been resumed again at Clara's request, who found the time hang weary upon her hands when not employed.

Her games and plays were become distasteful to her. She had locked up her toys, for she could not endure the sight of them; now, there was no rosy, laughing Thekla to enjoy them with her.

Adelaide was listening to her little pupil,

who with her arms crossed behind her, was repeating a piece of poetry. He would not disturb them till the lesson was over, and stood upon the rug with his back to the fire watching the kind and gentle instructress, who acknowledged his presence with a smile as he entered, and then turned her eyes again upon the book which lay before her.

When the verses were said, Clara opened her desk, and began to write a copy.

“I am come to say good bye to you, Miss Lindsay,” commenced Latimer.

“Are you?” said Adelaide, “already?” She looked at the clock—“I thought you were not going till twelve, and it is only a little after eleven.”

“It is better to be in time when one *must*

go," said Latimer. Adelaide turned to Clara.

"Clara, dear, look at your copy—that A is not a bit like mine."

Latimer felt annoyed at her attention to her pupil, and said, with as much coldness as he could assume,

"Have you any commands to Bury Hill?"

"Oh, yes; be so good as to give Mrs. Willoughby this little parcel," and she handed him one that lay on the table, saying as she did so, "but perhaps you think it a trouble; in which case you can leave it, and I will send it by the post."

"What makes you think so?" asked he, detaining the little hand which held the packet, for one moment in his own.

“Because you speak so strangely, Mr. Latimer; *why*, I can't imagine, for I am not aware of having displeased you in any way,” said she, laughing a little.

“Do you care for my displeasure then, Adelaide?”

“Of course I do.—Oh, Clara! my dear child! what a blot!—And so does Clara—See! the dread idea of it alone has made her hand shake!”

“Do you look upon me then, so very much in the light of a pedagogue?” exclaimed Latimer, with a forced laugh. “I suppose then, that I must not flatter myself that you will regret my departure?”

Adelaide made no answer, but bent over the back of Clara's chair and guided her hand as she wrote. Latimer felt that he

had made an awkward speech, and his feelings were too sincere to leave him sufficient presence of mind to extricate himself with grace ; and the momentary silence of his companions left him with that disagreeable sensation, to use an inelegant simile, of the taste of the last sentence being still in his mouth. Clara came to his relief. What blessings children are sometimes !

“ Oh, yes,” cried she, “ dear Mr. Latimer, we shall miss you very much. I shall miss you when I want a fine piece of seaweed,—and papa and mamma will miss you, and Adelaide will have no one to walk with her, shall you Adelaide ?”

“ No,” said she, “ I shall indeed miss my agreeable companion, whom I think anything but a pedagogue.—How could such an

idea come into your head?" asked she, turning to him with a smile.

"Young ladies are sometimes very saucy," replied Latimer, "and we book-worm philosophers are sadly afraid of falling victims to their sarcasms, and also very jealous of any symptom of veneration on their parts."

"I am sure I will not venerate you if you do not like it," said Adelaide, laughing. "Is there any thing else that I can avoid, or do, to please you?"

"Is there any thing you can do?—Oh, yes, Adelaide," in a low and earnest tone intended to reach her ear alone. "If I might venture—"

"Oh, yes, I give you leave!" said she gaily, "prefer your petition.—Am I to net you a purse? or paint you a picture?"

or embroider you a pair of slippers?
or——”

“ Oh, nothing!” said he, with an air of intense mortification. “ I hate embroidered slippers!”

“ Very well,” said his fair tormentor, “ I won’t make you a pair, then.—But, Mr. Latimer, why are you so cross?—I never saw you like this before; and the last day too!”

“ I am *not* cross,—only you *won’t* understand me!” He paused for a moment, waiting her reply; but perhaps she did not hear him, for she was again engaged with her pupil, and made none. Latimer sighed, and then looking at the clock, exclaimed,

“ It is getting late; I must be going. Good-bye, Clara, my dear child,” and he

kissed her forehead, as she rose from her chair. "Good-bye—Miss Lindsay," and he took the hand she held out to him. "Think now and then of the solitary student in his dingy library—if you can."

"Oh, we will think of you very often, Mr. Latimer!" said Clara.

"Yes, *you* will, Clara," said he.

"Why should you think other friends less happily endowed with memory?" said Adelaide; and her eyes sought the carpet, whose pattern her foot was tracing as she spoke.

"May I hope, then, that others will—"

"I should think you might feel very sure of it," replied she, raising her eyes to his face.

He again took her hand, whose pressure

she frankly returned, and was speedily on his way to the steamer, which was to convey him across to Portsmouth; thinking over her last speech, and endeavouring to flatter himself that it might mean to convey more hopes than it literally expressed.

CHAPTER II.

ADELAIDE walked with Clara alone that afternoon, and found that she missed the society of her late agreeable companion even more than she had expected; and returned home, feeling rather flat and out of spirits. She was annoyed, too, at what had passed between her and Latimer at their last interview. Women are not gene-

rally blind to the feelings of their admirers, and it would have betokened an unusual degree of obtusity had Adelaide not been a little enlightened by Latimer's words and manner at parting.

Much as she esteemed him, highly as she valued him, and greatly flattered as she could not help feeling at his preference for herself, still she was vexed. She did not want him to care for her "in that way." She could not bear to lose him as a friend, but she was sure that she could not regard him in any other light. She never could, she never would love again. The very thought was associated with pain. She detested the very word! It would be too provoking to be obliged to renounce those easy, pleasant terms which had hitherto

made her intercourse with Latimer so delightful; and yet this must inevitably ensue if he would not be satisfied with that degree of affection which she alone felt capable of bestowing.

“How I do wish he had never taken such nonsense into his head!” she murmured, half aloud, with a little impatient gesture, as the half-hour bell put an end to her cogitations.

She dressed, and went down to the dining-room. Sir Thomas was standing on the rug, with his back to the fire, when she entered. Lady Kynnaston had not yet made her appearance.

“Well, Miss Lindsay,” said he, as she stood beside him, “here we are reduced to our family party.—I am very sorry Latimer

took it into his head to leave us, for his society was a great acquisition."

"I am very sorry too," replied Adelaide.

"He is one of the most agreeable men I know," said Sir Thomas; "and that is the least of his qualifications.—I have known Latimer now for more than twenty years, for our friendship began at Eton. I went there a spoilt, idle boy of fourteen, and most happily for myself the door of my room was just opposite to Latimer's, who had been three years there already, though only two years my senior, and had acquired a certain standing in the school. As neighbours, we were naturally thrown together, but I know not what he saw in me that induced him to take the interest in

me which he did. It was certainly more from his own general benevolence than from any good qualities of my own.—But however that may be, to his influence and to his example am I indebted for any acquirements I may possess, and that I did not turn out as thoroughly ignorant a fellow as ever left Eton ; for I was well aware there would be no necessity to work for my daily bread, and came there possessed with the notion that I had nothing to do but amuse myself.—It was Latimer who taught me that there was something intrinsic in the value of acquirements,—that there was something more in a well-stored head, and exercised capacity, than a means to an end. It was not merely on the head of idleness, too, that he would lecture me. My dis-

position and principles he did all that lay in his power to correct and strengthen, and, but for his kind and judicious interference, both by example and precept, at all events I should have turned out much worse than I am.

“ In due time my friend went up to Oxford, being then nineteen ; and the year following I also left Eton, and joined him at college. Here we were as great friends as ever, though, as at Eton, he left me far behind him in the race for honours ; indeed, our intimacy has increased year by year, and he has been to me, through all my life, more than a brother.—Believe me, I have required one!”

He ceased speaking, and as Adelaide did not know exactly what to say, a pause

ensued, which Sir Thomas was the first to interrupt.

“ I wonder some fortunate woman has not succeeded in capturing him yet. How glad I should be to see him happily married!”

“ Perhaps he is very difficult to please,” said Adelaide, by way of saying something.

“ Yes, he *is* difficult to please,” answered his friend. “ Such men as Latimer have a right to be difficult to please—and I shall consider that woman *most happy* who succeeds in gaining his affections—the more valuable that they are not easily surrendered.”

Adelaide felt that Sir Thomas' eye was upon her, and dared not for her life look

up. She never had felt so awkward—but thinking it absolutely necessary to make some reply, she said :

“ Yes, I wonder he is not married. I am sure he would make a very kind husband. But, perhaps, a single life suits him better.” She stopped short, enraged at her stupid speech, and want of self-possession, for she felt her face getting very red, and she most particularly wished that Sir Thomas should not fancy that she took any part of his speech to herself.

“ He would, indeed, make a very kind husband,” said Sir Thomas, repeating her phrase, “ but some women can fancy nothing that is not made up in a fine, gilt binding !”

Happily, Lady Kynnaston now entered the room, and relieved Adelaide’s embar-

rassment, by diverting her husband's attention ; and dinner being announced, they all proceeded to the dining-room.

Lady Kynnaston's spirits were very much depressed ; she would make an effort to talk, but it was all in vain. The tears would gather to her eyes, and her plate was sent almost untasted from before her. Her thoughts were in the grave of her little Thekla. At dessert Clara came in, and went as usual to her father's side ; Thekla's little chair stood empty against the wall ! Sir Thomas followed his wife's eyes to the place where it stood, and understood her feelings.

“ Come,” said he, “ what do you say to a general move to the fire ? It looks very inviting this cold night,” and he drew three

chairs around it, and then led Geraldine to that in the centre. "Now, Miss Lindsay, you sit there, and I here," and he drew the remaining chair close to that of his wife, "and you, Clara, fetch that stool, and sit down at mamma's feet.—There, now we are very comfortable ; are we not, my darling ?" and he took his wife's hand and held it within his own.

She gave him a gentle, melancholy smile.

"I have been thinking," continued Sir Thomas, "that we are all getting tired of the Isle of Wight, and that it would do us all good to change the scene. What do you say to returning to poor old deserted Edmonbury, my love ? You have not been there this many a day ; and your school-

house is quite finished now.—You should be present at its opening.”

Lady Kynnaston gratefully appreciated the kindness which dictated this speech, treating the past as it had never been ; and said, while she gently pressed the hand that held her own,

“If you like it, I shall be most glad to go.”

Clara was evidently delighted, though in her quiet way, at the thoughts of returning home, and began wondering whether old Bashaw would be glad to see them, and whether her tame pigeon would still feed from her hand.

“And whether our gardens have been kept weeded, papa. Mamma, do you think Thekla’s white rose tree——” and then she

stopped and hid her face in her mother's lap, while she sobbed :

“ Oh, mamma ! Thekla won't see it, will she ? ”

Her mother raised her to her lap, and pressed the weeping child to her bosom. Their grief was the same !

Sir Thomas passed his arm tenderly round his wife's waist, and Adelaide rose and left the room ; she felt that the mourners would be better alone.

She took her work, upon entering the drawing-room, and began to meditate upon what Sir Thomas had said to her before they went in to dinner. She had been too much engaged endeavouring to keep up the conversation, and to raise her cousin's spirits, to do so before.

The words "fine gilt binding" still rung in her ears, and she felt vexed that Sir Thomas should have so low an opinion of her as he appeared to have.

"It is really too bad," thought she, "to be considered so very frivolous, because I do not want to marry his friend; for I really can understand that remark to mean nothing else.—I shall hate Mr. Latimer, if I am worried," and she pulled impatiently at her thread, which had got into a^k knot, and snapped it. She could not help smiling at her own petulance, and half-ashamed, took up a book, determining to think no more upon the subject, and to hope she had mistaken Sir Thomas' meaning, and Mr. Latimer's also.

In another half-hour the Kynnaston's

joined her, and she found that all had been arranged. They were to go to Edmonbury the end of the following week.

Adelaide was delighted with the prospect of change, always so agreeable to the young ; and her little pupil was quite elated, and would never tire of wondering and speculating, and of describing to Adelaide what “her own home” was like ; till something would bring her little sister again to her memory, and she would suddenly cease in tears.

Sir Thomas left them some days before the one fixed for their own departure, that he might give the necessary directions, and see every thing prepared at the Hall for their reception. He felt as happy as a bridegroom !

CHAPTER III.

THURSDAY came. Sir Thomas had returned the evening before to escort them on their journey ; and they said adieu to the Isle of Wight. It was a sore pang to the poor mother to tear herself from the land where her child lay buried amongst strangers ; where no one would visit her tiny grave, or preserve it from the rank invading

weeds ; but she felt that the effort must sooner or later be made, and with her characteristic resolution, nerved her will to endure it ; and so well did she control her feelings, that neither her husband, nor Adelaide, had the slightest idea what it cost her. Indeed, the latter felt almost surprised that she did not, as she imagined, feel the parting more, and she thought of the lonely grave in Jamaica.

Our travellers arrived at the park-gates of Edmonbury late on Saturday evening, and the carriage in another quarter of an hour rolled under the fine old gothic porch of the hall. The massive oak door opened wide to receive them, and the cheerful lights flashed upon the darkness without.

Sir Thomas jumped from the carriage,

and handed out his wife, and as he led her into the hall, he whispered with fond affection,

“This is our second wedding, my love—I am happier than when first I led you up these steps.”

“Ah, Kynnaston!” she answered, with deep feeling, “How much happier! and may your *second* marriage make you forget your first!”

He had not time to reply than by a pressure of the hand he held, for they were already in the hall, and leaving her for a moment, he returned for Adelaide and Clara.

Clara was fast asleep when the carriage stopped; and now, bewildered by the lights, and the servants who crowded around, she

looked like a poor little owl brought from his dark shady nook into the broad glare of day, and Morland speedily carried her off into the nursery.

Adelaide was struck with the fine old hall, which she had time to observe, while Lady Kynnaston was answering the cordial welcomes of her household. The dark oak wainscoting, finely carved; the lofty ceiling, rich in tracery work of crossing beams; the deep embrasures of the windows, which were curtained with heavy folds of crimson; the massive silver sconces fixed into the wall, whose wax-lights illuminated the scene as if for a festival. Ancient banners hung their stately tatters from the ceiling, and here and there the light played upon the armour of some ancestor of the family,

whose effigies were raised from distance to distance along the walls. At one end of the hall was a magnificent flight of stairs leading to the upper apartments; opposite it several doors leading to the rooms on the ground-floor. Through one of these Adelaide now followed Sir Thomas and Lady Kynaston into a pretty apartment, which formed a striking contrast to the hall—a cheerful room, furnished with every thing that could make it substantially comfortable, and adorned with pictures, flowers, china, every thing that could make it tastefully pretty.

“Now, my dear ladies,” said Sir Thomas, “go to your rooms, and take off your cloaks and your shawls, your bonnets and veils.

In the meanwhile I will order in supper—so be quick !”

Adelaide followed Lady Kynnaston through the hall and up the staircase, and down a long and spacious gallery, with doors on either side, leading into the different apartments.

“ Here is your room, dear Adelaide,” said Lady Kynnaston, opening one of these doors. “ I asked Sir Thomas to have this prepared for you, as I think it is the prettiest in the house, and it is not very far from my own. I hope you will like it—for my own sake, I could almost wish that you might never leave it.—Am I not a selfish wretch ?”

“ Oh, Geraldine !” exclaimed Adelaide, “ what a charming apartment ! I think it

will not be very easy to remove me when I am once established; and this glass," glancing at the mirror over the chimney-piece, "will see many changes in me before I leave you."

"Then, dear cousin, you will consider this your home," said Lady Kynnaston—"at all events till you get a better.—When you are ready, come to my room, the next door but one to your own, and we will go down again together."

They soon descended to the sitting-room, and a happy evening was this, the first of their reunion, as Sir Thomas thought, in his ancestral home.

The last time he and Geraldine had been here together, how different had been their mutual feelings!

“How happy I am to be at home once more!” cried he, as the meal concluded, he walked up and down, rubbing his hands occasionally, in a peculiar way which he had of his own, while his open, cheerful countenance glowed with satisfaction. “There is only one thing which I require to make my happiness complete!”

“What may that be?” asked his wife, “you very unreasonable man!” She too felt happy, happier than she had felt for many years, and caught the infection of his cheerfulness.

“I want Latimer!—I want my friend to share my content.”

“Have you still more to dispose of, than what Adelaide and I can take off your hands, then?” asked his wife, smilingly.

“Oh, yes, immeasurably more!—Let me see! What’s the day of the month? January the 8th.—Eh, Miss Lindsay?”

“Yes, I believe so,” said she.

“He need not be at Oxford till the 15th I know, and I will write to him, and tell him to cut short his visit at Bury Hill a little, and give us a few days before he returns to college.”

“Oh do, by all means!” said Lady Kynaston; “for my part, I shall be delighted to see him.”

“And Adelaide need not come down, if she does not like, you know,” remarked S Thomas.

“Why should you suppose she will not like?” asked his wife.

“Because she seems so indifferent about

it; and I cannot but think that where indifference is the only result of such an intimate acquaintance as there appeared to be between her and Charles, dislike must lie at the bottom of it."

"Dislike! Oh, Sir Thomas! — how can you say so?" exclaimed Adelaide. "Pray give me credit for a little better taste!"

"Never mind him, Adelaide," said Lady Kynnaston. "He is very exacting for his friend, and requires every one to feel the same degree of admiration for him that he does himself. Nothing less will satisfy him."

"I am sure they would willingly pay it if they knew him as well as I do," replied her husband; "and I cannot conceive what

you women are about that you are not all in love with him—I can only believe that it is because he is neither very young, nor very handsome ; or that he is too good for you.”

“You had better not take it for granted that we are not,” said Geraldine, laughing. “And now, as you are getting so very rude to us unfortunate ladies, we will say good night to you, and retire to our repose.” So saying, she took a candle from a side-table, and proceeded to light it.

“Are you angry with me, Miss Lindsay?” said Sir Thomas, approaching her with mock humility, and handing her a light.

“Of course I am,” said she. “How would you have me otherwise, at being classed *en masse*, with mythical ladies, who

are supposed to admire nothing but outward show; and at being thought so ungrateful as not to like Mr. Latimer, who has always been so very kind and good-natured to me?"

"Kind and good-natured!—Why, Adelaide, one would think you were speaking of some old patriarch, instead of a young man in the flower of his age!—Why, he is only three years older than I am!"

Lady Kynnaston and Adelaide both laughed, and again bidding good night to Sir Thomas, left the room together.

CHAPTER IV.

GERALDINE followed her cousin into her room, and as they both stood together before the fire, began,

“ You will think Sir Thomas very odd, I am afraid, Adelaide, from one or two speeches which he made just now—but you must make allowances for his most justifiable partiality, and for the ardent love he

bears his friend. He thinks that you do not sufficiently appreciate Mr. Latimer, and that your opinion of him may be of the greatest importance to his happiness—I hope you will not think us very impertinent, my dear, in attempting in the slightest degree to interfere, but we cannot be blind to the fact of how much happiness it is in your power to confer upon, believe me, one of the very best, as well as one of the most intellectually-gifted of men.”

Adelaide blushed crimson at this speech, and then said,

“Taking what you say for granted, I do not want to leave you.”

“Do not you like Mr. Latimer?” inquired Lady Kynnaston.

“How can I do otherwise, but——”

“Well then, my dear, let me conjure you to think seriously before you reject all thoughts of what I allude to.—Consider the happiness that it is in your power to confer upon another.—Consider the happiness which that other can most undoubtedly confer upon you ; for it is impossible but that the greatest felicity must result from an union with such a man as Mr. Latimer—any woman might consider herself blest to have attracted his regard ; and a girl of so much ability and good sense as yourself, I should have thought, would have of all others appreciated his worth.”

“I do, Lady Kynnaston,” replied Adelaide, playing with one of the ornaments upon the chimney-piece.

“Then why——”

“ I have no wish to——”

“ My dear Adelaide, you have told me that you like him.”

“ Yes.”

“ Do not you think his abilities first rate?”

“ Yes.”

“ Do not you believe him to be gifted with the noblest disposition?”

“ Yes.”

“ Do not you think him a delightful companion?”

“ Yes.”

“ And that he possesses a heart the most warm and affectionate?”

“ I do.”

“ Well, then, what more *do* you require?”

Adelaide looked back with a feeling of dismay upon the long list of qualities which

had just been enumerated, and felt that there was indeed nothing left to be desired. "I acknowledge the justice of all you say, Geraldine, and it is impossible to make an objection to Mr. Latimer, or to desire any thing further—but—I would rather remain as I am."

"I shall begin to think that Sir Thomas is right after all," said his wife, taking Adelaide's hand, "and that you really are one of that class of young ladies with whom appearance is the highest claim to love. Nothing but this—or—a prior attachment,"—she looked fixedly at her as she spoke,—“can account for your strange insensibility upon this head,—and this last surmise I believe to be as unfounded as the first!”

The piece of china escaped from Ade-

laide's hand, and fell in fragments upon the hearth. She stooped to pick up the remains, and rising, again encountered Lady Kynnaston's gaze, whose eyes were fixed upon her face, with a searching, inquiring expression. Adelaide at once understood its meaning, and said, as she attempted to put the pieces of the little ornament together.

“Your surmises are quite correct, Geraldine.”

Lady Kynnaston still looked doubtful.

“I assure you they are,” said Adelaide, with emphasis, “I have no attachment.”

“Then I cannot understand you,” replied her friend. “And now good night,—I will not tease you any more with that which I trust you will not ascribe to impertinence,

but to the most sincere, the most affectionate desire for your welfare,—I hope I have not offended you, dearest Adelaide?” for she was still busy with the china, and did not look up.

“ Oh no, indeed not !—I do not mean to say I like it, and I would rather, perhaps, that you had said nothing about this matter, but I know your motives are the very kindest;” and Adelaide turned to her friend as she spoke, and kissed her affectionately.

“ Good night then, once more,” and Lady Kynnaston turned to leave the room ; but just as she reached the door, Adelaide exclaimed,—“ Stop, Geraldine,—tell me, did he commission you to speak to me ?”

“ He did not exactly commission me, but I know it will please him to know, that

whatever little influence I may possess, is exerted in his friend's behalf ;—Sir Thomas would do any thing to further his happiness, and is most desirous——”

“ I mean Mr. Latimer,” said Adelaide.

“ No, indeed he has not,—he has never breathed a syllable to us upon the subject. What I have just said, I again repeat, has been merely dictated by my desire that you should not throw away happiness for want of a little consideration,—the happiness of *two* people, remember, Adelaide,—for we are both of us afraid that you do not return, perhaps are not aware of Mr. Latimer's affection.—No : Mr. Latimer has never even alluded to the subject.”

“ I am glad of that,” replied Adelaide ;
“ I confess if he had, I should have been

much annoyed. I hope too, that your advice is premature, and that you take for granted——”

“ No, Adelaide ; do not think that.—I am perfectly persuaded, that neither Sir Thomas or I, am mistaken.—It is impossible.—To judge correctly in any matter, it is necessary, in the first place, to see it in its true light, and to this true light I wish to direct your eyes,—do not close them to the fact, that he deeply, deeply loves you ; and though you may think my advice premature, yet weigh it before it is too late !—Remember, Mr. Latimer will probably be here in a few days,—do not, do not trifle with such happiness as it lays in your power both to receive and to confer !” So saying she left the room.

Adelaide slowly began her preparations for repose, and drawing a chair to the fire, leisurely proceeded to unfasten her hair, till all its silken luxuriance fell about her shoulders ; and as she combed one shining tress after another, she mused upon what had just been said to her.

What should she do ? she thought.—She could not but acknowledge, that had she been in a bystander's place, like Lady Kynaston, she would have given precisely the same advice. She could not bear to forfeit any of the place she held in Sir Thomas and his wife's estimation, which she felt sure must be the case if she so unaccountably, so capriciously, as it would appear to them, should refuse their friend's hand, if he should indeed offer it to her. She could

not bear to pain Mr. Latimer, for whom she felt so true a regard, and sorry indeed should she be never to see him again, which, of course, must be the result did she not accept him, or at least, no longer upon their present friendly footing. Yet, the thoughts of the alternative she could entertain still less; and again she repeated to herself, that she should never be able to love again; that the sentiment was for ever dead within her. She wished to live a single life, and devote herself to Clara's education and her own favourite pursuits, independent and undisturbed, in this lovely place, in the society of friends to whom she was now so much attached.

“I will think no more of it,” exclaimed she, “If it ever does come to the dreaded point, which by every means in my

power I will endeavour to prevent, why then,—why then it will be time enough to make up my mind about it.”

And then the whole business struck her in a new light, and she could not help smiling, when she thought that, after all perhaps, poor Mr. Latimer was guiltless of cherishing any thoughts against her peace ; and that if he knew what feelings had been ascribed to him, would beg her to give herself no annoyance on this subject, as he had never had the slightest intention of giving her an opportunity of refusing him.

Why was it that these last reflections were rather unpleasant to Adelaide ? Did she think of Mostyn ?—She did ; but it was only to assure herself that she had told Lady Kynnaston nothing but the truth,

when she had asserted her affections to be disengaged. That episode in her life seemed to her like some unhappy dream, though its consequences were so lasting, and she thought, that should accident ever throw them together again, she could meet him with unconcern; and were he even, under different circumstances, again to come forward, and ask her to be his, she would not hesitate a moment in rejecting him.

CHAPTER V.

IN a day or two Sir Thomas received an answer from Latimer ;—" He would come," the letter said, " to witness his friend's happiness, for a few days. Circumstances had greatly altered since he left them last.—It was too long a story to write about.—He would tell them all when he arrived, which he hoped would be that evening."

“What is in the wind now?” said Sir Thomas, handing the letter to his wife. “See if you can make any thing of it.—What can possibly have occurred within the last ten days to alter his circumstances,—without indeed he is going to be married,” and he glanced across the table at Adelaide, who, in pursuance of her resolution to act as naturally and straightforwardly as possible in all that concerned Latimer, was looking with an interested, inquiring air at Lady Kynnaston, as she read the letter.

“May Adelaide read it?” inquired lady Kynnaston, when she had finished.

“Oh, yes, certainly—I cannot think what he is about doing. However, my curiosity will soon be gratified.”

“Very possibly he has got the living he

was expecting. The incumbent is, or was, a very old man," suggested lady Kynnaston.

"Very likely, indeed—no doubt. He has been very ill, I know. We may find some intelligence in to-day's papers," and he tore them hastily open.

"Yes, yes; here it is!" he exclaimed, and read the announcement from the obituary. "It is very wrong to be glad at the poor, good old man's death, but I really can't help it.—Such a capital living! A very parsonage *par excellence*, and in the pleasantest county in England!—Old fellow! I am delighted!—But why could he not tell me at once in his letter, instead of setting my brains to work? I should never have guessed it, had it not been for you, darling."

“I suppose he wished to have the pleasure of announcing his good fortune in person,” said Geraldine, extricating herself from her husband’s joyous embrace; “and I am quite sorry I have found out his secret beforehand; I am sure he wanted to be his own harbinger. I wish I had not told you.—Now, do be quiet, Kynaston—you are as unruly as a school-boy!”

“Because I am so glad!” cried he. “I tell you what, Geraldine, we must furnish his drawing-room for him. You have so much taste; you will do it better than any one in the world; you not excepted, Adelaide! When I was last in town, I saw some very handsome things for curtains and carpets, and a very cleverly-contrived library

table: I thought of Latimer directly—it will just suit him!”

“My dear Sir Thomas, you seem quite beside yourself this morning,” said his wife, smiling affectionately at him, as he walked up and down the room, rubbing his hands together as usual, when much excited.

“Has he not done more for me through life than a brother? and do I not love him better than twenty?” exclaimed Sir Thomas. “Yes, that I do! and there is nothing in this world I would not do for him!”

“No, that I really believe,” replied Lady Kynnaston; “from furnishing a drawing-room to——”

“To procuring him, if possible, as charm-

ing a wife as my own," interrupted her husband.

"Ah, that you know would be difficult."

"There is no knowing how I might succeed even in that, in a degree! Things are altered; Latimer will be quite a catch now. Recollect that irresistible parsonage! Such advantages will have their effect, even upon the most disinterested; and Mr. Latimer, of Ryeland Parsonage, is a very different person from Mr. Latimer, tutor of — College, Oxford."

"No doubt—but I think you would be sorry that your friend should fall a victim to the most fascinating *angler-ess* that ever caught; and there *are* women, Kynnaston, who are even capable of remaining unin-

fluenced by such an attraction as Ryeland Parsonage."

"I am afraid such inflexible young ladies are sadly in the minority—Oh, I have seen so much of that kind of work in my young days, before I met with you, my love!"

"No doubt," again, replied his wife, laughing, "but how could *you* expect to be taken without the addition of Edmonbury? Now, Mr. Latimer, by your own showing, is a pearl of price in himself."

"Which means to say that I am of baser metal.—Well, I will pardon, nay, submit to the insult, in consideration of the compliment you pay to my friend."

"Adelaide," said Lady Kynnaston, "you are very silent—have you not one word to

say in support of me, and my defence of woman-kind ?”

“Nothing, I am afraid,” said Adelaide. “If Sir Thomas has so low an opinion of us all, no doubt it is founded upon experience, and nothing can prove the reverse but a contrary example—and if I had been born a young man, with a fine property, instead of a young lady with none, I might have been unfortunate enough to have arrived at the same conclusions.—But still even then, I think, I would have believed in disinterestedness as a reality going somewhere about the world in woman’s form, if I had never met with it myself—and that from a purely selfish motive, for the sake of my own peace of mind,—least I should take an aversion to the world ; which sentiment

it is as well to avoid, you know, as long as one is in it.—And now, good bye, till luncheon time. I must go and teach Clara :” so saying, she left the room ; and as she almost bounded into the school-room, exclaimed aloud,

“ Now, I need not think of marrying Mr. Latimer !”

“ My dear Kynnaston !” exclaimed his wife, as soon as she was gone, “ What have you been about ?—I suppose you have reconsidered your wish that Adelaide should marry Charles ?”

“ No, I have not,” said he. “ I think it a very desirable thing ; and if she will have the good sense—I mean, rather, if she is not so very foolish as to refuse him, I am convinced it will be the most capital match

in the world for both parties,—for though I like teasing Adelaide a little for her old-maidish notions, I like her exceedingly—I delight in her !”

“ Well, then, I can only say that you have taken the very best means to ensure a failure to your wishes. How could you make such a mistake, my dear love, as to say all that you did about interested marriages and his rich living? Adelaide is disinterested to a fault, if that is possible; and the very idea of the shadow of a suspicion attaching to her that his altered circumstances have had any influence upon her decision, will entirely prevent her ever thinking of him again.”

“ Oh no, Geraldine !” said Sir Thomas, who would fain persuade himself, as people

always do, when they have made a mistake, that the consequences will not be so serious as others apprehend, "she will think no such thing."

"I am afraid you will find yourself mistaken," said Lady Kynnaston.

"Remember the conversation which passed between her and me the other night, which I related to you.—*Then* she was certainly rather adverse than favourable to our wishes, though more from a general distaste to marriage than to any objection to Charles. If she change her mind now, particularly after what you have said, what can she avoid supposing will be attributed as the motive to her conduct?"

"How provoking!" exclaimed Sir Thomas. "I have acted like the brute in the fable

of the "Bear and the Gardener" towards my poor friend. Oh, I wish I had never asked him to come, or that he had never said any thing of his piece of good fortune.—How could I be so benighted?"

"I had hoped that my advice might have had some weight with her," said Lady Kynnaston. "However," continued she, "the mischief is done now!—It was very ill-judged on my part saying any thing of this unfortunate living before her; I might have foreseen the consequences.—But do not let us despair."

"I dare say Latimer will be able to persuade her that her accepting him will be an act of heroic self-abnegation," said Sir Thomas; "though perhaps if we had not interfered at all, it would have been better.—I

fancy these delicate affairs are best left to nature.—At all events, the introduction of a bear's paw like mine into the delicate meshes of such a spider's web, is any thing but improving to the face of affairs.—But it will be a pity if Adelaide loses real happiness in the intricate labyrinth of such very fine-spun feelings ; a little straightforward sense, now, would set her free in a moment from such coils.”

“Adelaide is the most sensible girl I know,” replied Lady Kynnaston ; “and it is my faith in her good sense which leads me to hope all will still be well.—It is impossible not to admire the extreme refinement of her feelings, even if they do carry her a little too far.—And then Latimer himself has not spoken to her yet.—She

does not know, she hardly believes, how much he loves her ; and no woman can be sure of her own feelings till they are directly appealed to by the man who wishes to gain them."

"Very true, my Aristotle!—And now, love, you look pale and tired, and I see your spirits are flagging, my own resigned, courageous Geraldine! so go and put on your things, and I will order the phaeton round, and we will have a drive in the park."

How sweet were the kind husband's praises to the heart of his wife! Her gratitude for the affection which she had hitherto so ill deserved, and the inward peace which the consciousness of having returned to her duties imparted, was beginning to compen-

sate to her for the loss of her child, that little idol upon whom she had concentrated all her love! Again and again did she feel how righteously she had been bereaved of it; for the mist was cleared from her conscience, and the errors of her past life stood condemned before it.

CHAPTER VI.

THEY were all sitting in the blue-room, that pretty apartment to which we have already been introduced. Dinner had been concluded some little time, and a substantial tea was set upon the table for their expected guest. Sir Thomas was reading in an arm-chair before the fire. Lady Kynnas-ton was seated on the sofa near him, at her

work, listening to Adelaide, whose rich and melodious voice was giving utterance to some of Hadyn's finest compositions. Clara was seated on a low stool at her mother's feet looking at pictures, and occasionally stopping to caress her favourite little dog who nestled in her lap.

There was an air of comfort, repose, and peace, pervading the scene above described, infinitely agreeable and refreshing ; and the bright lights, and baskets of gay hot-house flowers with which the room was adorned, the pictures upon the walls, and the warm tints upon the carpet, relieved the sombre draperies of the ladies, which, far from imparting gloom to the picture, contrasted agreeably with the objects surrounding them.

“That is very beautiful!—I can understand that music,” said Sir Thomas, throwing aside his paper, when Adelaide had concluded Hadyn’s fine song called “Sympathy;” and, rising from his chair, he stood with his hands crossed behind him, and his back to the fire. “I cannot say your Italian affairs give me much pleasure,” he continued. “But that song you have just sung is music set to words, not words to music.—and, besides, you pronounce so clearly that I can hear every word you say, which is an unusual accomplishment.—If I were Latimer, now, I should say something of the marriage of ‘Lydian Airs,’ and ‘Immortal Verse:’ did not somebody want a match to take place between those worthies, my dear?” asked he, turning to his wife.

“Now Kynnaston, you know that every thing of that sort is quite out of your way ; so take my advice, and have nothing to do with it.”

“ Well, my love, I only asked a question. But tell me, do not you agree with what I said just now about songs in general, and Adelaide’s singing, in particular ?”

“About Adelaide’s singing, in particular, I quite agree with you ; but as for songs in general, I cannot say I much like English.”

“Oh, you are all for the tira, lira, lira style. I give you up !—But, Adelaide, what is your opinion ?”

“ Really, Sir Thomas,” said she, as she turned over the leaves of her music-book, “I am afraid I must differ from you.—I do not like English songs in general, though of

course there are exceptions.—The words are, usually, so very silly that they do not deserve to make the good match you mentioned, and I feel quite ashamed of pronouncing such nonsense distinctly.”

“Come, come, confess that your Italian songs are not famous for their good sense.”

“I cannot say that they are particularly sensible, certainly,” replied Adelaide, laughing; “but then you know they are disguised in such a melodious language, that they at least sound pretty, and no one pretends to listen to their meaning; and then Italian and German music in itself is so far more beautiful, to my mind, than English.”

“Whose sweet simplicity, you think, is

sweet insipidity, don't you, Adelaide?" said Lady Kynnaston.

"Yes, I am afraid I do; but then I sing very few English songs; so, perhaps, I am not a fair judge."

"You do not sing them because you do not like them.—Cause and effect, my dear; so I do not see why you should lose your title to be a fair judge," replied Lady Kynnaston.

"Well, then, fair judge," said Sir Thomas, "I suppose I must give in, or at least feel ashamed of my taste."

"No occasion for either," said his wife; "to have no taste at all is the thing to be ashamed of."

A ring at the hall-door put a stop to the discussion.

“There he is!” cried Sir Thomas; “I was about beginning to give him up!” and he hastily left the room.

Adelaide joined Lady Kynnaston at the fire-place. She felt nervous and uncomfortable, and vexed with herself for being either; and that she could no longer meet Latimer with her former unconstrained and cordial satisfaction.

He came in with Sir Thomas, looking pale and worn, as if he had undergone some severe illness, or mental struggle. Lady Kynnaston pressed forward and cordially welcomed him; but Adelaide stood still in her place, till Latimer came up to her and held out his hand; and when this silent greeting had been exchanged between them, she withdrew to the table and took her

work. Clara joined her there with her book, and Adelaide felt less awkward, as she occasionally was called upon by her little pupil to explain some picture to her, or listen to her admiration of something to her eyes unusually lovely.

“Well, my dear fellow!” exclaimed Sir Thomas, gleefully rubbing his hands together; “your letter puzzled me this morning—I do not think I could have made any thing of it had it not been for my wife’s assistance.”

“I congratulate you, most warmly, Mr. Latimer,” said Geraldine; “and I hope you are not vexed with me for having forestalled your own announcement of your good fortune to Sir Thomas.”

Latimer looked from one to another in evident surprise.

“I really hardly understand you,” said he at length.

“Come, come, Charles, you need not make any further mystery of the business, for we saw the announcement in the paper.”

“So soon, my dear fellow!—Impossible!”

“We did, however—there was nothing unusual in it, was there?—But I did not notice the date of the poor old man’s death.”

“Ah!” said Latimer, with a smile of sweet but indescribable expression, “I understand what you mean now!”

“Why, my dear fellow, what on earth

else could we mean? We are congratulating you upon your accession to the living of Ryeland—now do you understand?” and he laid his hand upon the shoulder of his friend.

“Do not you think it a subject of congratulation, or are you overpowered by your good fortune?” continued he, for Latimer made no reply, but again that smile played upon, or rather illuminated his countenance.

“I shall not accept Ryeland,” said he quietly, in answer to this last inquiry.

“The deuce you will not!” cried Sir Thomas, impetuously; “why, what could you desire better?—Twelve hundred a year, a capital house, in one of the prettiest counties in England, and in the most agreeable neighbourhood——”

“I am not ignorant of all its advantages,”

replied Latimer, "but I have accepted another appointment."

"That you like better?"

"Hardly," said Latimer; and the same smile again passed over his features.

"I confess I should have thought it difficult to have found any thing on the whole more advantageous and agreeable.—But what is it?"

"A chaplaincy."

"Oh, well!—At home, of course?"

"No; abroad."

"Abroad, Mr. Latimer!" exclaimed Lady Kynnaston, for Sir Thomas seemed unable to make any reply to this unexpected announcement.

"Oh, I am indeed sorry!—But where?—I hope an agreeable one?"

“Not very, I am afraid. It is that of X——”

“X——!” exclaimed Sir Thomas, Lady Kynnaston, and Adelaide, at once in tones of the greatest amazement.

“Latimer!”—Are you mad?”—cried Sir Thomas.

“I hope not, indeed,” replied his friend.

“Well, I must say your conduct looks confoundedly like it!” said Sir Thomas; and sinking into a chair, with a gesture of despair, he continued,

“With your talents—with your prospects—to bury yourself alive in that hole!—Why, any one would do for such a place as that!”

“It is precisely because I do not agree with you, then, that I am going,” answered Latimer.

“Such a place!” continued Sir Thomas, without attending to his reply. “To give up such a society as you adorn and enjoy, to go and live amongst felons and ruffians! The very outcast of the earth!—the refuse of the gallows!—without an equal to speak to!”

“We have had such an example set us before, some eighteen hundred years ago, Kynnaston,” replied Latimer.

“But your reasons—your reasons for this sacrifice?” cried Sir Thomas, impetuously.

“Simply because I think it is my duty,” said Latimer. “The chaplaincy is become vacant. There was naturally a difficulty in filling it; and I knew that if I had not volunteered, it would have been accepted by a person most unsuitable to the post.”

“But consider the good you might have done at Ryeland!” cried Sir Thomas. “It is only exchanging one sphere of utility for another; and I cannot see why you should not choose the most agreeable!”

“There was no difficulty in filling that vacancy,” said Latimer, with the same sweet smile; “and the present incumbent is an excellent man, and has a large family.”

“Present incumbent!—Do you mean to say, then, that it is all decided?”

“Quite so.”

Sir Thomas fell back in his chair with a fresh gesture of despair.

“And so then, Mr. Latimer,” said Lady Kynnaston, no longer able to restrain her admiration; while Adelaide, with changing colour, listened in breathless attention—

“so then you have given up every hope that man holds dear—every enjoyment that gives value to life—you have banished yourself from your friends and your country to live in exile with the most depraved of the human race!—What heroic self-sacrifice!”

“You give me more credit than I deserve, my dear Lady Kynnaston,” replied Latimer; “I considered it my duty, and as such I do not see much merit in having determined to follow it. A contrary line of conduct would have been more deserving of blame than this of praise, I think.”

“There is not one in a hundred who would have acted as you have done, however,” said Lady Kynnaston.

“Oh yes, there are.—But granting that, I do not see what my conscience has to do

with that of another.—What appears to me right might not have struck another as such, and you know we must be judged by our own.”

“Latimer!” cried Sir Thomas, starting up, and grasping him by the hand, “you are the noblest fellow in the world!”

“Not quite that,” answered his friend with a smile. And then he sighed. Even that friend little knew the extent of the sacrifice!

“Do you know,” he continued, in a cheerful voice, “I do not think it will be half as bad as you seem to imagine. The island is fertile and beautiful, and the climate delightful.—To be sure, you will say, the society is not desirable; but then I hope to improve that society—that is my object; and,

believe me, when a man has an object, he is never very unhappy."

"What happiness ought he then to enjoy who proposes to himself so noble a one as yours?" exclaimed Lady Kynnaston. "And yet there are few who would seek for it in such a course!"

"May I have any tea to-night, after my long journey?" said Latimer.

"Have you made it, Adelaide dear?" inquired Lady Kynnaston.

"No!" exclaimed she, hastily rising from her seat, and going to the tea-table. "I beg your pardon!—I—I quite forgot it!"

"What we have just been hearing would have excused inattention to still graver duties," said Lady Kynnaston.

Adelaide made no reply. There was a

great clatter amongst the tea-cups at that instant, so perhaps she did not hear the remark. Latimer took up a book that was lying on the sofa.

“Oh! you have got this,” said he, turning over the leaves. “Do you think it deserving of its reputation? I have not had any time for reading lately.”

“It is rather ill-judged, in some things, I think,” said Lady Kynnaston; “but it is certainly ‘talented,’ to use a phrase the advertisements are so fond of.”

“Absurd trash!” muttered Sir Thomas, who could by no means recover the effect of the late intelligence. “Romantic nonsense! —Adelaide, give me some tea.”

“Clara, dear, come for your papa’s tea,” said Adelaide.

“ Will you have the goodness to get me some, Mr. Latimer ?” asked Lady Kynnaston.

He started, threw down the book, and approaching the table where Adelaide was officiating, preferred the request, and then stood silently by while she prepared it. He stood a little behind her, and she could not see his countenance. She handed the cup to him, which he received with an inclination of the head, and turned from the table.

“ Your own is ready whenever you like, Mr. Latimer,” said Adelaide, timidly, as he was going.

“ I thank you,” replied he, and returned to Lady Kynnaston.

Adelaide felt hurt and mortified at his

coldness. There seemed little necessity for discouraging him, as she had intended! little fear of his coming to the point! No danger of her being teased into marrying him!—Why was it that these reflections were so very unpleasant to her? Why was she not, on the contrary, delighted at finding that he acted so much in accordance with her wishes? and that she was spared the pain of distressing him by her repulses?

“Because,” thought she, in answer to these queries, which rose unbidden to her mind, and which were rather unconsciously felt, then deliberately proposed—“because he seems no longer to have any regard for me!—I did not wish to lose him as a friend—as a brother!—He seems to avoid

me, to dislike me. What can I have done? And now, too! When I admire him and esteem him more than ever!—At all events Geraldine will see how much she was mistaken, and how premature was her advice!”

Here her reflections were interrupted by their object, who again approached the tea-table and asked for his tea.

Adelaide immediately handed it to him, and then said ;

“I hope you left dear Mrs. Willoughby quite well, and all the children?”

“Quite well, thank you. I delivered your little packet ; my sister seemed much pleased with its contents and your remembrance of her ; but of course you have heard from her on the subject.”

“Yes I have.—How is my friend Frede-

rick getting on?—Does he like Sandhurst?”

“Very much; and he is improved in every way, since you saw him. His father objected much to the profession he was bent upon following, and I had much difficulty in persuading him to give in. It is a great mistake to cross a boy’s inclination when it is so very decided as Frederick’s, I think.”

“Your sister must be grieved at *your* decision,” said Adelaide.

“Yes, she will be sorry to lose me.—It is one of the greatest sacrifices I make to leave her.—It was long before I could induce her to listen to her sense of right, for her affection for me argued most eloquently against my project. However she is con-

vinced now. And it is a great satisfaction to me that I have her approbation.—The approbation of those one loves is very precious.”

Adelaide longed to tell him how she, too, approved him, how she too admired his conduct! But she dared not. Would it not be assuming his affection as her own, after what he had just said? She had not forgotten the bitter lesson she had learnt some months before, and this recollection kept her silent.

Latimer seemed half to expect a reply, one more to the purpose, perhaps, than Adelaide's next inquiry of,

“Will you have another cup of tea?”

“No, thank you,” he said, and putting it down upon the table with something that

sounded very like a sigh, he again returned to the fire-place.

“ Well, Charles,” said Sir Thomas, “ and when are you going to this Paradise of Fiends ?—and how long do you calculate it will take you to transform them into something more worthy of their abode ?”

“ I shall leave England about May, I think.—When I shall return, it is impossible to say.”

“ Well—when you do, bring us a specimen of a converted pick-pocket, will you ?”

“ If I am successful—if I am enabled to show the light to these poor misguided and ignorant evil-doers—for a more ignorant and neglected set of wretches do not exist—neglected from their cradle—exposed to temptation from their childhood—and sur-

rounded with every example to lead them to crime;—the scum, the fermentation of a civilized society!—If, I say, my endeavours are blessed with success, you, my dear Kynnaston, will be the very last man in the world to regret what I am about to do!”

“I know it, I know it, my dear fellow! But I cannot make up my mind to part with you!” and he griped Latimer’s hand fast within his own. “I cannot bear to think of what your future life will be, —I have half a mind to go out with you myself!”

“I tell you again, Kynnaston, that I shall do very well, and mean to be very happy.”

“At least as happy as circumstances will

admit," said Lady Kynnaston. "But that is at best but a conditional kind of happiness."

"No, but I mean to be *very* happy," persisted Latimer. "Our happiness is much more in our own power, much more independent of outward circumstances than you seem to imagine. I do not mean to say that any one is, or that I am, unsusceptible to disappointment, incapable of being made still happier by the attainment of one's dearest wishes; but what I mean is, that Time and Trust will mitigate the first, and Cheerfulness and Content dispense with the latter."

Lady Kynnaston made no reply, but she felt the truth of what he said.

"Come, Adelaide!" cried Sir Thomas,

“we have all done tea. What are you doing in the cold there, quite alone?—Come to the fire, and let us have the benefit of your reflections.—Do not you agree with me?—Would not Mr. Latimer have done much better in keeping Ryeland, than in exiling himself to this detestable island?”

Thus appealed to, Adelaide left the teatable, and sat down on the sofa by Lady Kynnaston, who made a place for her by her side.

“Well?” asked Sir Thomas. “Do not you think so?”

“No, I do not,” said she, in a low voice.

“Oh, get away with you!” exclaimed he’
“You are all a pack of romantic enthusiasts together! I will have nothing more to say to any one of you!” He attempted

a laugh ; but it was a miserable imitation ; and the moisture which glistened in his eyes belied his affected hilarity.

“Let us say no more upon the subject, then,” said Latimer.

“And let us all bid each other good night,” said lady Kynnaston, “for Mr. Latimer looks very tired, and we have all had excitement enough for one night. I only wish it had been of a more agreeable description.”

She rose, and shaking hands with Latimer, left the room, followed by Adelaide, who, before doing so, could not avoid, as she bade Latimer good night, giving him one look, half-inquiring, half-reproachful. He could not have seen it, though, as his eyes were fixed upon a cameo brooch which she

wore. She could not imagine what there could be in it, that so attracted his attention, for he had often seen it before.

CHAPTER VII.

It was indeed true.

Latimer, actuated by motives of the purest benevolence and the most heroic sense of duty, had renounced the pleasant living which he had been so long expecting, and which, by the failing health of the late incumbent seemed just within his grasp ; all the pleasures of society and friendship ;

and that which cost him a harder struggle than all, his hopes of one day calling Adelaide his wife. For how could he for one moment cherish a hope that she would join his exile? He had much too low an opinion of his own, much too high an opinion of her personal advantages, to imagine such a sacrifice on her part possible. He tried even not to wish it; but such a degree of unselfishness was beyond his power of attaining. Selfish he however considered that wish, and he determined that nothing in his conduct should lead her to imagine that he entertained it. He had even the magnanimity to rejoice that he had refrained from offering her his hand during his visit at the Isle of Wight, an offer, which

something whispered him, might not then have been declined.

The circumstances which had induced him to throw up all his hopes of worldly happiness were simply as he had stated them.

The chaplaincy in X—— had become vacant through the retirement of the gentleman who had last filled that situation, and who had thrown it up in disgust; nor was the settlement much the loser by his departure.

There were few candidates for the vacancy, as may be well imagined; and it would certainly have fallen to a man, in every respect unfitted for the post, and who only meant to accept it as a last refuge from beggary and disgrace, his own mis-

conduct having precluded him from any hopes of acquiring a maintenance in his profession in his own country, had not Latimer volunteered his services, which were at once accepted.

Two or three days after the arrangement was concluded, the long expected death of the venerable incumbent of Ryeland occurred; and the living to which Latimer now became eligible was offered to him. He still might have thrown up the chaplaincy and have accepted it, but he had previously counted the cost of his sacrifice, and determined now to consummate it, in spite of all the remonstrances and expostulations of his clerical friends who wrote to him upon the subject, and of all the earnest entreaties of his

sister, at whose house he was staying at the time.

He succeeded, however, in convincing her that he was right, and she had, though almost reluctantly, changed her opposition into approbation.

She was the only person who was aware of the full extent of the sacrifice, for all his hopes had been confided to her; indeed, had he not done so, she would, from her previous knowledge, have divined them. Perhaps she still cherished a secret expectation that in this one point he might not, after all, be disappointed; for sisters generally entertain an idea that there is nothing, and no one too good for their brothers—nay—that is half good enough; or that there can be any sacrifice too great to be made for

their 'sweet sakes;' and if there ever was sister justified in this fond partiality, surely Mrs. Willoughby was the one.

Latimer had not written immediately to inform Sir Thomas of the alteration which had taken place in his plans, for, to tell the truth, he had not the courage to do so. He knew how it would afflict him, and doubted even of his sympathy. Sir Thomas was a man of plain, straightforward good sense; and though kind-hearted, generous and benevolent in a high degree, would not, perhaps, quite agree in the obligatory nature of the motive, or however he might appreciate, approve the sacrifice.

The invitation arrived very happily. Latimer would much rather inform him by word of mouth of what he had done, than

write it him by letter. He should see, too, in what light Adelaide would regard his conduct. If he wrote, her opinion would probably never come to his knowledge. Her approbation, he thought, would sweeten the bitter cup he was about to drain, though it might prove the last boon he should ever receive from her.

And yet he hardly knew how to meet her, and he felt afraid that he should be unable to command his feelings were they to be again upon the same intimate footing as before.

He determined, then, to avoid her as much as possible. Better that she should think his behaviour strange and capricious, than that she should suppose him so selfish as to wish, or so egotistical as to expect,

that she would abandon her happy home with the Kynnaston's,—her friends,—her country,—nay, renounce all the expectations to which by her beauty and accomplishments she was so justly entitled,—to accompany him, a man so much older than herself; with so few external attractions; with no advantage of fortune, to such a retreat as X——.

Had he been able to offer her the home he had expected, then, indeed, it would have been different. He might have had the satisfaction of thinking that the marriage would not be wholly without its advantages on her side, though he well knew she was incapable of taking them into consideration.

He condemned himself, for these reasons,

to that painful restraint of manner at their meeting which had been so unaccountable to Adelaide ; and the self-control which he found it necessary to exercise in order to follow out his determination, was, under the circumstances, well-nigh heroic ; whilst the very difficulty which he experienced caused him to over-act his part.

Adelaide retired to her room that night feeling really unhappy. The more she fancied Mr. Latimer had become indifferent to her, the more value she seemed to attach to his regard. This was very silly on her part, very capricious no doubt ; but still she could not help it. Again, she endeavoured by all imaginable suppositions to account for the alteration of manner which gave her so much pain. The real

reason was the only one which escaped her.

“If his manner was not so strangely distant, I would ask him,” she thought; “I would find out what it is—I cannot bear to be upon this uncomfortable, this miserable footing!—And he will go away—go upon his noble errand to that dreadful island, and I shall never never see him again!—He will be there without a soul to speak to, except those unhappy felons,—no one to encourage him—no one to lighten his labours—no one to make at least his home cheerful and pleasant for him!—Dear, dear Mr. Latimer!”

Ah, Adelaide! who is it that stands in such very close affinity to pity?

The whole of the next day, Adelaide saw

little of Latimer. All the morning he was shut up in the library, and in the afternoon he went out walking with Sir Thomas, and they did not return till a few moments before the dressing-bell sounded.

At dinner, a *partie quarrée* gave no opportunity for private conversation. It was carried on entirely between Lady Kynnaston and the two gentlemen, for Adelaide hardly spoke during the whole time of the repast, being never called upon to give an opinion upon any of the topics discussed, and feeling far too uncomfortable and out of spirits, to venture hazarding any remarks upon her own account.

When the ladies returned to the drawing-room, Adelaide remained standing by Lady Kynnaston, idly turning a fire-screen

round and round in her hands ; hoping, longing for Lady Kynnaston to say something relative to Mr. Latimer—something that would give her an opportunity of mentioning his altered bearing, and of learning whether her cousin had noticed it, and whether she could possibly account for it. But Geraldine had taken her embroidery frame, and most pertinaciously and provokingly, kept counting the stitches, and referring to her pattern, till Adelaide, quite in despair, after making several abortive attempts to lead the conversation to that quarter, and vexed at her own want of resolution, which prevented her from putting the question direct, turned from the fire, and took up a book which lay upon the table.

“Read to us, Adelaide, will you?—Clara, darling, get your work,” said Lady Kynnaston.

There would be, decidedly, no opportunity for the conversation she longed for that evening!

Adelaide did as she was desired, but her attention was occupied with any thing rather than with the sense of the words she was uttering.

The gentlemen presently made their appearance; but every moment of the chill reserve which had established itself between Latimer and Adelaide, like waves upon an iceberg, seemed but to add to the barrier which severed them; and when her former friend at length approached the table where Adelaide sat, her ideas seemed

perfectly paralysed ; and before she could think of any thing to say, that did not appear to her too silly and too trivial, he had turned away, and had entered into discourse with Lady Kynnaston, leaving Adelaide still further sunk in her own opinion, for her want of common decision and presence of mind.

Sir Thomas requested her to sing the song which had pleased him so much the night before. She did so, and with the most touching expression.—Sir Thomas heartily applauded her ; but when upon rising from the piano she glanced at Latimer, she saw him, to her chagrin, sitting on the chair she had before occupied, attentively reading, his elbow upon the table, and his hand screening his eyes from the glare of

the lamp; nor did he once look up when she had ceased, or make any remark about the song; and yet Mr. Latimer was usually so fond of music! Adelaide ought to have had more spirit than to have cared for this marked indifference, and to have returned it, on her part, with interest; but, alas! such a spirit she did not possess; and she felt quite grateful to the servant who, coming in with the tea-tray, afforded her an excuse for occupying herself unseen, behind the friendly shelter of the hissing urn.

In this unsatisfactory manner the evening concluded. Adelaide hoped that Lady Kynnaston would accompany her into her room, when the party broke up for the night; but she passed on to her own, where Adelaide, by a sudden impulse, fol-

lowed her. She stood by the toilette table, taking up and examining one pretty little article after another, hoping to gather courage to unburthen her mind; but that tiresome French maid seemed to-night as if she never would be satisfied with brushing her mistress's hair; and Adelaide, at last, quite discouraged, returned to her own apartment, having settled nothing more important with Geraldine, than what should be the next subject of Clara's French studies.

CHAPTER VIII.

CLARA'S school-room, at Edmonbury, was a charming little apartment. It was situated quite out of the way of the rest of the house, in the second floor of the east turret. Octangular; the walls were fitted with well-stored bookshelves; even the door itself was a bookcase; and when it was closed, the gaily bound volumes, sur-

rounding the inmate, imparted a most agreeable sensation of snugness, warmth, and amusement.

This room was lighted by three rather high and narrow windows, shaded with crimson and white muslin curtains, formerly lattice-paned, but now filled with plate-glass, and opening to the floor. They gave egress to a pretty balcony, in the summer time, filled with flowers; and even now hung with scarlet-berried evergreens, from which a spiral flight of steps descended into the flower-garden. This turret-room commanded a glorious prospect. Over the foreground of lawn, fountain and flower borders, and the rich middle distance formed by the park, studded with tufts of fine old trees, and animated with ever

changing groups of deer and cattle, was seen a wide expanse of rich champaign country, bounded on the horizon by a range of blue hills, that might almost claim rank as mountains. Nothing could be more enjoyable than this balcony in summer ; standing itself in the deep shade of the high turret, which at once screened and supported it, though all lay bright and glad in the broad sunlight below ; while, from the woods, the deep cooing of the turtle-dove stole with its soothing influence upon the ear, blended with the harmonious voices of the rooks from their distant nursery, and the sweet scent of the mignonette and other fragrant flowers, were wafted upwards from the gay flower-beds ; every sense was at once gratified.

But it was winter time now. The windows were fast closed against the howling wind, which in vain strove to effect an entrance through their massive frames. The flower-garden was wrapped in its white, wintry shroud; the leafless trees showed their delicate fibre-work against the dull, grey sky; the cattle and deer herded in the sheds. No cooing doves—no summer scents were there. A bright fire blazed and crackled in the hearth, in the place of the greenhouse flowers, which, in another season, filled its dark and gaping mouth; the table was drawn before it, instead of before the open window—and at this table sat Adelaide, at her usual occupation at this hour, her beloved drawing.

The door silently opened, and Latimer entered, and looked round the room.

“I thought I should have found my little god-child here,” he said.

“No, she is playing in the gallery, as it is too cold for her to go out. Do you want her?—Shall I fetch her?”

“Oh, no, thank you; it will do at any time. It was only a book which I wished to give her.—I want her to remember me now and then when I am far away.”

“I do not think that she is likely to forget you,” said Adelaide.

“How dreary it looks from this turret, now,” said Latimer, approaching the window; “I do not think that I was ever in the room before in winter.”

“The view must be lovely in summer,”

replied Adelaide ; “ but I think this is a charming little room at any season of the year.”

“ Yes, it is very comfortable indeed,” said Latimer, in an abstracted tone of voice, as if he hardly noticed her remark ; and then turned to the book-case near him.

“ What a number of books you have here !” he continued in the same tone.

“ More than Clara and I shall ever get through, if she remains a child, and under my instruction, for the next hundred years, I am afraid,” said Adelaide.

“ Oh, do you think so ?” said Latimer.

This time Adelaide felt sure that he had hardly even heard what she said.

“ Lady Kynnaston seems much better

than I expected to find her," was his next remark.

" Her courage and fortitude surprise me. But from what I have observed now and then, I know she suffers far more than any one else has an idea of. Sir Thomas is so happy in his new-found domestic happiness that I fancy he scarcely regrets the price he paid for it ; and she seems to make it a principle not to damp his joy by any gloom on her own part.—Do not you admire her now, Mr. Latimer?"

" Yes, indeed I do. It is very difficult to maintain the mastery over one's feelings, and they *say* that those of a mother are stronger than any."

He said this in a tone so low and full of feeling that it thrilled through Adelaide's

heart, and she cast one hurried glance to the place where he stood; but he was rapidly turning over the leaves of a book which he held in his hand, and his eyes being bent upon it, she could not see their expression.

Some moments' silence ensued, when Latimer seeming suddenly, and by a violent effort, to arouse himself, advanced abruptly to Adelaide's table, and laying a very beautifully bound volume upon it, by the side of her drawing board, said,

“It is not only in Clara's remembrance that I should wish, if possible, to live—Will you have this book?”

“No!” said Adelaide, starting up, and putting her hands behind her; “‘Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind!’—Keep

your book, Mr. Latimer,—I do not want *that* to remind me of you.” Her cheek grew crimson with excitement, and her eyes glistened with something more.

Latimer looked at her with astonishment.

“Adelaide!” exclaimed he.

“You said, just now,” continued Adelaide impetuously, passing her hand rapidly across her eyes, for something prevented her seeing very clearly at the moment; “you said, just now, that it was very difficult to command one’s feelings.—I quite agree with you—it is *too* difficult!—I can do so no longer. Tell me, Mr. Latimer, what have I done to displease you?”

“To displease me, Adelaide!” said he, in a tone, whose mingled tenderness and surprise it is impossible to imitate.

“ Yes,—for your manner is so changed—so different from what it was! And before you go—before you go to X—— I should like to know what is the reason—what have I done ?”

“ Cannot you imagine the reason ?” he asked.

“ No, indeed, I cannot. Though ever since the evening you arrived, I have been trying to discover it.”

“ Consider, then, my altered circumstances.—That may assist you.”

“ I do not see what they have to do with the question at all!” exclaimed Adelaide.

“ Do you not ?” said he, sadly ; “ I thought you would have appreciated my motives ; but I see I was mistaken, and that you have never understood me !”

Adelaide knew not what to reply, and he continued,

“ Now that you have yourself asked for an explanation, I have not the courage—I will no longer conceal from you my feelings. You little know how much it has cost me to restrain the expression of them so long !

“ But do not for one moment suppose, Adelaide, that I have any expectation——. I know at what sacrifice I accepted this exile—the sacrifice of hope itself ; for when I last parted from you, a hope I *did* cherish. Now I see that it was unfounded, and that you never even perceived, far less ever took into consideration, that which I would have given the world to have dared to have revealed to you.—Adelaide,” for she still remained silent, “ shall I go on ?”

“ Yes,” murmured she. Her eyes were fixed upon the floor, and the changing colour in her cheek betrayed her emotion:

“ I had hoped then,” he proceeded, “ that time,—that my devotion,—my deep affection,—might have induced you to consent to my wishes ; for I thought, Adelaide, that you did not dislike me, though I knew your feelings towards me were not *then* such as I desired,—friendly, but no more. And you may imagine with what joy I considered, that should I be so happy—so inexpressibly happy!—as to prevail upon you to look upon me with a warmer feeling than regard, I should have had a home to offer you, not unworthy of your acceptance; and where you might have been happy and contented.

“ But now that is no longer possible ; now I have no longer even *that* advantage to offer you ; and it was in order that you might understand that I had renounced all hope, and to free myself from the suspicion of being supposed capable of cherishing, even in thought, a wish that might annoy you, that I have condemned myself to that manner which you complain of,—which it has been torture to me to maintain.

“ But, Adelaide, I would not have you forget me,—not quite forget me ! Think of me sometimes, in my distant island ; and let me at least have the alleviation of your approval,—the satisfaction of thinking that it accompanies me in my labours !”

There was a pause.

“ You do not wish for any one to assist you,

then?" said Adelaide, at length, in accents so tremulous and low, that they were scarcely intelligible, while her eyes were still bent upon the carpet.

"Adelaide!" exclaimed Latimer, starting forwards; "what do you say?—What do you mean?—Oh, no!—Fool that I am!" he added, half to himself, and again retreating.

"I cannot bear that you should go alone," she whispered, her eyes still averted.

"What may I understand?" cried he. "Is it then possible? Can you?—will you?—" he caught her hand as he impetuously uttered these broken sentences.

"Without you know of any one who will do so more willingly," said she, raising her blue eyes, now filled with tears, to his face,

and which were, the next moment, concealed upon his shoulder, as he folded her with rapture to his breast, exclaiming—

“My Adelaide!—dearest—most generous!” and many such like passionate expressions, which appeared, no doubt, much more sensible to her than they would do to the reader.

They sat down together upon the sofa; and then Latimer told her of his long attachment; how he had loved her from the first fortnight of her visit to Bury Hill. And then he hinted, most feelingly, and with the tenderest delicacy, to the reason which had occasioned his sudden departure. Of the letter which he had received from Mrs. Willoughby informing him of the circumstances which had occurred previously

to Adelaide's acceptance of Lady Kynnaston's situation ; of his restored hopes of ultimate success, when he found that one insurmountable impediment had been removed ; of the anxiety with which, during his stay in the Isle of Wight, he had caught at any hint which might enlighten him as to her true feelings ; and of the ultimate conclusion which he had arrived at, that her heart was quite at her own disposal.

“Your conclusion was quite correct, Charles,” said she, when he had ended. “It is a great relief to me to find that you are acquainted with all those circumstances, which are now to me like a dream that is past, and which, had you not been aware of, I should have felt it my duty to have

related to you, however painful to myself to have recalled them ; that you might, if you had thought fit, have rejected a heart which could not boast all previous insensibility." And she blushed crimson.

"Ah, my love!" said Latimer, "if you had only half a heart to bestow upon me, I would willingly have accepted it.—Provided," he added, "that half was *all* my own—and that, I think, I may feel sure of, may I not?"

"Ah, Latimer! 'There are no birds in last year's nest!'—If I did not feel sure of it, you might have gone alone to X——."

"To X——!" repeated Latimer. "In my joy I had forgotten!"

And then he continued, very seriously :

"Have you considered, my dearest, what

you are about to do?—the sacrifice you are going to make?—Ah, Adelaide! ought I to be so selfish as to allow you to complete it?—Ought I to take advantage of your generosity?—You, so lovely, so accomplished!—to give up all!”

“All what?” said Adelaide.

Latimer hesitated.

“Well!” persisted she, “all what am I to give up?”

“All thoughts of living happily settled in England,” said he; and he could not help smiling, in spite of the lugubrious tones in which he had commenced his speech, at the manner in which she put the question.

“I am quite determined upon one thing,” said Adelaide, “and that is, if you will not

take me with you, to set up a private establishment for the reformation of female convicts on my own account.—So now you can do as you choose.”

He seized her hand and covered it with kisses ; it was the only reply which could be made.

So they continued to converse—Latimer in a state of happiness, beyond anything that he had previously imagined the human heart to be capable of experiencing, till Clara came in from play and disturbed the *tête-à-tête*, and Latimer left the room to acquaint Sir Thomas of this new event.

CHAPTER IX.

IT may be supposed with what satisfaction the intelligence was received by both the Kynnastons, who were sitting together in the library, and how hearty were their congratulations. Latimer did not long remain with them. He was soon in the school-room again, where, quietly seated in a corner, he pretended to read, while his

whole soul lay, as it were, at the feet of Adelaide, who continued her instructions to her pupil with a gentle serenity which betokened the calm contentment of her mind.

She was quite satisfied with what she had done. Happy at having it in her power to alleviate the deprivations and the banishment to which Latimer had so nobly condemned himself; delighted at the prospect of the devoted and useful life which lay before her, so attractive to a mind as enthusiastic and deeply religious as was Adelaide's; and, perhaps, above all, grateful for that devoted and generous attachment, so much the reverse of Captain Mostyn's passing fancy. And while she thought of this, the difference of her present feelings towards Latimer and those which

she had once entertained for Mostyn, rose in vivid contrast before her mind ; as did also the persons and characters of their objects. The latter so brilliant—so fascinating—so talented—yet so superficial!—The former so little gifted with external advantages, yet endowed with such powers of intellect—such depths of feeling—such exalted goodness ! She acknowledged that her love for the one had been kindled by the *ignis fatuus* of imagination, her devotion for the other at the steady lamp of reason. Happy those with whom both are at once satisfied!—But that is a bliss reserved for few.

Such were her thoughts as she almost mechanically listened to Clara as she read her English history.

Hardly was the lesson finished when Sir Thomas entered the room.

“How is this?” he cried, “at lessons?—and upon such a day as this?—Away with your books, Clara! I proclaim a holiday.—Why, you studious pair!—Is this the way you begin life together?” and then in the warmest and most cordial manner he congratulated Adelaide upon the intelligence he had just learned, and begged she would go down to Lady Kynnaston.

Geraldine received her with a warm embrace.

“I thought how it would end,” she said, “the moment I heard of X——. It would, I foresaw, have more charms for you, young St. Ursula, than all the comforts of Ryeland Parsonage.”

“Oh, Geraldine!—I admired his behaviour so much!—And—and—I could not bear that he should go alone!”

“And then you thought that he did not care for you?—I saw it all!”

“Oh no!—it was not that which made me wish to go with him!”

“Well, then—it at least opened your eyes to what your real feelings had been all through.”

“Not that quite, either—I did not like the thoughts of never seeing him again—and I was very unhappy when I thought he had ceased to have any regard for me; but I did not *love* him till I found how generously, and how deeply he felt for me.”

“I dare say you thought it very ill-

naturedly unsympathizing on my part that I took no notice of the alteration in Charles' manner towards you ?”

“Indeed I did—rather.”

“I perceived what was upon your mind; but I resolved to leave the business to its own management this time—I felt sure that when both minds were set one way, an *éclaircissement* must ensue, sooner or later.—Well, dearest Adelaide, wise has been your decision ! In your union with Latimer you will find a happiness, which will set such a mind as yours far above all the pleasures and enjoyments which wealth and society can afford; and an inward peace and satisfaction in the performance of those important duties which you have both prescribed to yourselves, ‘which this world

cannot give.'—But there are not many who will think so."

How delightfully did the next ten days fly over the heads of the four friends! Sir Thomas all joyous frank hilarity—his wife all kind sympathy—Adelaide gaily, serenely happy; feeling her admiration for Latimer increasing every day with her more intimate acquaintance with his character, and her affection with every further experience of his tender, his devoted love for herself.

As for Latimer, description can only give a very faint idea of the intense happiness which seemed to steep his very being! He felt that he wanted the capacity for absorbing all that was offered to him. It was too much! And yet for worlds he would

not part with an iota. That she should accept him!—love him enough to accompany him to such an habitation as the one to which he was about to proceed! Sometimes this appeared to him incredible—impossible—some wild dream!

“In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.”

Something would occur to prevent it!—Such bliss was too great for mortal.—How had he deserved it? Surely, surely some great disappointment was yet in store for him—some searching trial—the more hard to bear, contrasting as it would now, with such exquisite happiness.

Latimer, of course, lost no time in writing to his sister to acquaint her of this unhopedor event; which intelligence was received

by her with a delight only second to his own. She wrote back, entreating Adelaide to come and see her again. She was longing to embrace her as a sister ; and, she added, Bury Hill was so near the town of D——, where every requisite for her outfit could so conveniently be procured, that it was really necessary that she should come.

Adelaide needed no such inducement to persuade her to accept the invitation ; and it was finally arranged that she should proceed to Mr. Willoughby's about the commencement of March, which month was now rapidly approaching, paying, previously, a visit to her grandmother, where Mr. Brown promised to meet her.

Latimer left Edmonbury immediately

after this was all settled, as he had to go up to London to arrange some pressing business, and receive all necessary instructions relating to his chaplaincy; and a few days after his departure, Adelaide also took leave of the Kynnastons, and went to pay her promised visit to G——.

Mrs. Melton was the only person concerned to whom Adelaide's engagement had afforded dissatisfaction, and Adelaide had not long been seated in her little parlour before she commenced with her objections.

“Well, my dear,” said she in a querulous voice, “I hoped you would have made a more comfortable match, I must say.—I can't say I like your going so far.—This X—— seems a pokey little dot of a place. I searched for it in the *Gazeteer*, as well as

on the map, and it was with great trouble that I found it.—And I see it is the place where all the wicked people and murderers go. I suppose they are not let to go about as they like; but still I think it very improper for a lady to go to such a place,—quite dangerous!—I really wonder you like going, Adelaide!”

“I do not much like going, dear grand-mamma—but Mr. Latimer is going, and you would not have me stay behind, would you?”

“It is all very fine, my dear, I dare say,” answered the old lady, slowly turning her hands round and round in each other; “and Mr. Latimer may be a very nice person; but in my young days, young ladies were satisfied with settling quietly down nearer

home, and I do not see that all this wandering about—this sailing over the sea in steamers—and rushing across the land on these new-fangled railways, will do you any good!”

“I wish very much we could have remained in England, as far as my own happiness is concerned, grandmamma, but you know, I explained in my letter to you, why Mr. Latimer thought it his duty to go to this place.”

“Yes, my dear; some idea that he might make all those wicked people good—But if it could not be done in England, I don’t see how it can be done in that other place, with its queer name. To my mind they are much better left to themselves.—And take care,” added she, holding up her finger.

admonishingly at Adelaide, "take care, my dear, 'Evil communications corrupt good manners!'"

It was no use arguing against such ideas as these. Adelaide could only rise, and kneeling on the stool at Mrs. Melton's feet, ask her, laughing, if she thought that she and Mr. Latimer would turn pickpockets? The good old lady laughed in her turn, and said she did not mean that quite; but she could not be prevailed upon to look at Adelaide's engagement in any favourable light; and over and over again repeated the unavailing wish, that Adelaide had never gone to Bury Hill, and had never met with Charles Latimer.

In a few days Mr. Brown arrived, and Adelaide was again happy in the society

of this the oldest and most valued of her friends; for he had taken a room at the inn, and spent every hour of the day during his stay at G——, at Mrs. Melton's.

He understood and appreciated Adelaide's motives; and more heartily and sympathizingly entered into her views than any other of her friends—Latimer himself, perhaps, not excepted. To him had been confided all the ardent aspirations after active well-doing; all the enthusiastic benevolence of that young mind. How often in Jamaica had their conversations turned upon such subjects; and how emulous had she been of continuing through life her father's example; how fearful of allowing herself to be satisfied with mere barren desires after active goodness, one of the

most dangerous of conscience's "flattering unctions"—the intending much but doing nothing.

Certainly the grief she had suffered by the blight upon her first attachment, and the disappointment in her first idol—had paved the way for the sacrifice she was about to make. It had sobered, had disenchanted her mind; and had imparted a seriousness and depth of character, which from the casual observer lay concealed under her still gay and cheerful manner; and, as has been previously observed, it was this first disappointment which made her return Latimer's generous and most devoted affection, with feelings of such intense gratitude, as soon as she became aware of its extent; as it was admiration for an act of abnega-

tion which she was so peculiarly capable of appreciating, which had awakened her mind to that sympathy, which produced to Latimer such unhopèd-for results.

It is scarcely necessary to say that not a day passed without her hearing from him. This correspondence could only increase her affection for her betrothed. Some characters can *let themselves out*, more by writing than by any other medium. This, perhaps, is generally the case when the disposition is inclined to reserve. The tongue feels often fettered by an unaccountable shyness, an unwillingness to present one's feelings and thoughts *alive*, as it were, even to our dearest friends ; but to the pen every thing is so readily confided ; all restraint is removed ; the whole soul poured forth, and

committed to the perusal of the person addressed. Thus it was with Latimer! Words of affection which he hardly dared to use to her face, were lavished upon the silent paper. Thought the most profound; information the most unbounded; humour the most amusing; all attired in imaginative yet simple eloquence—formed the substance of his charming letters! Adelaide felt that till then she had not half appreciated him, and she began to adore him.”

CHAPTER X.

THE 1st of March arrived, and Adelaide with Mr. Brown, who had been invited to accompany her, set forth on their journey to Bury Hill. This was now the third time she had travelled the same road ; and under what different circumstances ! There is always something melancholy in retrospection, and though Adelaide had every

reason to be most grateful for the change in her circumstances since last she took her seat in that coach, yet her reflections wore rather a tinge of sadness. Every little detail of the journey, every object by which they passed, the very lining, and pattern of the binding of the interior of the vehicle, recalled with life-like reality the intensity of mental suffering she had then endured. There are scenes which no after happiness, which time itself cannot efface, though it enables one to look at the scars which it has left, with almost indifference. She felt almost nervous at the idea of again meeting Mrs. Willoughby, associated as she was with former recollections; and it was not till Mr. Brown, relapsing from silence into slumber, left her at liberty to follow her inclinations,

by opening for the fourth time Latimer's last letter, that she felt by its perusal restored, in great measure, to herself.

The coach stopped, as usual, at the accustomed inn, and there again stood Mr. Willoughby's carriage. The two elder girls were within, and their affectionate greeting, and lively chatter, completed the cure which the letter had commenced, and Adelaide alighted at the hall-door of Bury Hill, in spirits as gay and cheerful as their own.

“My dearest Adelaide!”

“Dearest Mrs. Willoughby!—Dearest Sophia!”

They were in each others embrace; and Mrs. Willoughby, her arm still encircling Adelaide's waist, led her to the room she

had prepared for her ; it was not the one which she had occupied before.

“ Let me take off your cloak and bonnet,” she began. “ There, now, sit down, and let me tell you by word of mouth, my love, that which I could so ill express by letter—my joy at the prospect of having you for my sister.”

“ Oh, Adelaide! I have been wishing for this so long!—I have known all through—that is, nearly all through—what Charles was thinking about ; and for some time past I had hoped his wishes would ultimately be crowned with success.—But when I heard of this frightful banishment, I again almost, though not quite, despaired ; for I knew what a noble girl you were, and that if he had not been losing his time all the

while he was at the Isle of Wight, you were not one to be deterred from conferring so much happiness—which you will excuse the partiality of a sister in thinking would not have been quite unreturned—by such an obstacle.”

Adelaide quite satisfied Mrs. Willoughby's sisterly affection, by her warm and sincere assurances of her value for Latimer, and of the happiness which the possession of the love of such a man afforded her.

From this topic they turned to others of more general interest; but not the least allusion was made on either side to Mostyn, or to any occurrence during Adelaide's first visit. Indeed, none could have been mentioned independently of him, so intimately had he been associated with every event.

Adelaide learnt from the proud mother, amongst other domestic intelligence, that Frederick was giving great satisfaction at Sandhurst ; and that his father was almost reconciled to the profession he had chosen.

The following evening, Latimer, having completed his immediate business sooner than he had anticipated, unexpectedly arrived. He had given Adelaide no notice of his intention ; and if his purpose in keeping her ignorant of it had been to assure himself of the effect which a sudden appearance would produce, the joyful and delighted surprise of Adelaide's reception amply satisfied him.

Lovers are proverbially tiresome company to every one but themselves. No doubt their absorption in each other does prevent

them from being very agreeable to any one else.

Latimer brought with him the information that the vessel which was to carry them to their destination would sail in the third week of May ; and he urged Adelaide to fix some definite day for their marriage. It was finally settled that it should take place the first week in April ; Mrs. Willoughby engaging that every thing should be prepared for Adelaide's outfit by that time. Her savings from Lady Kynnaston's handsome salary, and her own little income, amply provided the funds for all the necessary outlay ; and Adelaide was spared, by her own independent exertions, from the annoyance, as she would have felt it, of being indebted for any thing to Latimer's

purse, before she could claim a share in it as her own.

In busy preparation on Mrs. Willoughby's part, and in almost unmixed happiness on that of Adelaide and Latimer, diversified by the occasionally necessary absences of the latter to town, the first weeks of March passed rapidly by. The wedding-day was approaching, and Latimer began to believe that he would actually reach the goal of his felicity. Leaving him in the enjoyment of such a faith, we must turn to a very different scene.

CHAPTER XI.

ONE wet afternoon towards the latter end of March, a small group of officers were assembled in the anti-room of the barracks at D——. A couple were playing backgammon in one corner of the comfortably furnished apartment ; another was stretched at full length upon the sofa absorbed in the perusal of “Bell’s Life;” another was seated

upon the table doing nothing at all, without smoking a cigar might come under the head of occupation ; while a fifth was endeavouring to find amusement at the open window, for though the rain fell heavily, the air was mild and spring-like.

“ Will that rain ever give over, Bennet ? ” asked the young gentleman on the table, removing his cigar, to give utterance to the question and a loud yawn at the same time. “ I’m tired to death of stopping indoors—I wish to goodness one could get out ! ”

“ I don’t see the ghost of a chance of it ! ” said the Lieutenant at the window. “ It’s all well enough to have such weather in April, one makes up one’s mind to it, and

gets something to do in-doors,—but I declare it's too bad in March!"

"Will you have another hit?" asked one of the players at the backgammon board.

"Oh, no, thank you," drawled his vanquished antagonist, languidly rising from the table. "I have no luck to-day—I haven't thrown a single doublet since I sat down."

"Backgammon is all luck when Blayne loses, I remark," said Clapton, from the table. "But I have never heard what it is when he *wins*."

There was a general burst of laughter.

"Well!" exclaimed Clapton, rising from his seat, with another abyss-like yawn, and stretching himself almost to dislocation, "I can't stand this any longer!—I shall go

out if it rains grape-shot!—Come along, Bennet!”

“Stop a minute!” cried Bennet. “Who the deuce is this?—Here’s a cab coming up!”

There was a general rush to the window.

The cab stopped at the door of the officers’ quarters, the steps were let down, and out jumped a slight and elegant-looking young man. He threw a rapid glance from his dark eyes at the party assembled in the window, nodded a smiling recognition, passed through the door, and in another moment was in the ante-room.

“Mostyn!”

“My dear fellow!”

“Why, what in earth!”

“How are you?”

“Sick leave,—eh?”

Were the various and hasty exclamations with which he was greeted, as his brother officers surrounded him, and each in turn shook him warmly by the hand.

“I have taken you all by surprise, haven’t I?” said he gaily laughing, as he returned their cordial welcome.

“That you have!” said they.

“And I can tell you what, Mostyn,” said Captain Blayne’s late antagonist, Doctor Grant, “if you have come home on sick leave, they must be less particular at Bermuda than we are here.—I never saw a man look better in my life! I am afraid I could not have given you a certificate.”

“Oh, you know, the voyage has done wonders for me,” replied Mostyn, laughing

again. "But I did not come home on sick leave."

"What the deuce excuse did you make then, my dear fellow?" said Captain Lawson.

"Business!" answered Mostyn in a tone of mock importance. "Don't you know that I have come into my fortune?"

"How?"—"What?"—"When?"—"By whom?" cried all at once.

"My poor old aunt is gone at last; and so I applied for leave to come and look after my affairs."

"Well, I congratulate you heartily," said Captain Lawson; "and I only hope she has left you something worthy of your acceptance."

"Yes, very tolerably so. I am not at

all dissatisfied.—But come!—I have told you my news, give me your's, now.—What have you all been about since I left?—I declare I have only heard once from any one of you! I never knew such a set of fellows! It is out of sight out of mind with you, I find.”

“There has been really nothing to tell,—nothing further than what you could see for yourself in the Gazette; and it is such a bore writing,” said Captain Blayne.

“Gray's married Miss Hawkston; or rather, Miss Hawkston has married Gray,” said Clapton. “An old flirt of yours; don't you remember her?”

“Oh, yes, I remember her!—well, I don't envy him his wife.”

“No, nor any one else either. She's a

bit of a temper, I imagine, and will keep poor old Gray in capital order. She never lets him come near mess, and as for touching a card—!”

“Oh, by the way,” interrupted Mostyn, “how are they all at Bury Hill?”

“We have none of us been to the house for an age,” said Bennet.

“No,—and I’m sorry for it,” said Captain Lawson. “It was one of the pleasantest places to visit in the neighbourhood.—I fancy you were the attraction, Mostyn, for since you went, as Bennet says, we have seldom been asked.”

“Have they had no pic-nics,—no balls in the house,—no visitors?” asked Mostyn.

“They have a visitor there now!” said Bennet. “That pretty girl!—what is her

name?—Confound it, I have forgotten it!—
You know, Mostyn !”

“ I !—How should I know ?”

“ Don’t you remember that very pretty girl you flirted so desperately with last summer ?—By George !—I thought you were in for it then !” exclaimed Lawson.

“ Oh, I know—Miss—Miss—” said Mostyn, as if trying to recollect.

“ Miss, Miss,” said Lawson, imitating him ; “ You don’t really mean to say you have forgotten Miss Lindsay’s name ?”

“ You cannot expect him to remember *all* his flirtations,” observed Clapton. “ It’s ‘ *mille e tre* ’ with him.”

They all laughed ; but Mostyn’s was rather a faint attempt.

“How do you know this, then, if you never go to the house?” inquired he.

“I saw her at church,” said Bennet, “in the Bury Hill pew. But she is not looking nearly so pretty as she was; she’s grown pale and thinish, and looks older.”

“Well,” said Captain Lawson, “I saw her the other day in the Willoughby’s carriage, in High-street, and I thought she looked handsomer than ever—more interesting looking, even than last year.—Ah! by the way, who was the man in the carriage with them?”

“A plain, pedagogue-looking kind of a man, do you mean?”

“You might call him so; but I thought him a particularly gentleman-like pleasant looking fellow; though, cer-

tainly, there was nothing of the Count about him."

"It must have been Mrs. Willoughby's brother," said Bennet. "He was at church, too. I think he's on a visit there."

"I wonder, is there any thing in the wind between the young lady and him," said Lawson. "I thought they seemed *very* friendly."

"Adelaide Lindsay and Latimer!" exclaimed Mostyn, almost involuntarily.

"What an absurd notion!" cried Clapton.

"Why, he's old enough to be the young lady's grandfather!"

"I'll lay you twenty to one he is not more than thirty-six or seven—and what is that?"

"Why, ten years older than the gal-

lant Captain Lawson," said Clapton, laughing.

"Well, I told you he was in the flower of his age," was the rejoinder. "But to return to what we were talking about—I have a notion I am right."

"Why?—What makes you imagine any thing so improbable?" asked Clapton.

"There was a general air of happiness diffused over the whole party, quite unattributable to any other cause."

"Pah, my dear fellow!" exclaimed Mostyn. "Cannot three people look happy together, without two out of the number being engaged to be married?"

"I never heard such an alarming doctrine!" cried Clapton. "*Nota Bene*, Bennet!"

Be chary of your smiles when next you walk with two young ladies."

"Besides," said Mostyn, without noticing the interruption, "you said that one of the party, at least, looked pale and melancholy—I do not see how that tallies exactly with your account of all this ineffable happiness."

"No, no—pale and interesting.—No one said that Miss Lindsay looked melancholy," said Captain Lawson. "On the contrary, when *I* saw her, she was smiling and laughing, and looking as pleasant as a May morning."

"I should not have styled that *interesting*, exactly," said Mostyn.

"Perhaps not—but all I can say is, that she looked so charming, as she smiled upon her *vis-à-vis*, in reply to some remarks he

made to her, bending forwards and looking at her,—I assure you, *very* affectionately,—that *I* felt quite interested.—Happy man! thought I.”

“The carriage must have been driving very slowly to afford you leisure for all your remarks,” ejaculated Mostyn, who had now thrown himself back in a large arm-chair, biting the ivory handle of his cane.

“I never said any thing about its driving at all, my dear fellow.—It was standing at the door of Regent-house. Mrs. Willoughby got out there, leaving the two in the carriage.—I was standing at the library door opposite, and had plenty of time to make my observations.—My private opinion is, that Mrs. Willoughby was purchasing the *trousseau*.”

All laughed, but Mostyn, who, starting up impetuously from his half-recumbent position, exclaimed :

“Where’s that Mess waiter?—I’m half famished!” And, taking up his hat, he left the room.

Another general burst of laughter followed his departure.

“Poor Mostyn!” said Captain Blayne. “It’s too bad.—How you worried him!”

“I like teasing him upon this head,” said Lawson. “It does him good, and I did it on purpose.—Mostyn is a capital fellow, and no one likes him better than I do; he has only one fault, he thinks himself irresistible, a second Julius Cæsar, as far as women are concerned; and it drives him perfectly mad to think that any other man

can make an impression! Think, then, how it nettles him, to have it supposed that any fair one, after being laid siege to by him, should yield to another. As to believing there is any truth in what I have been plaguing him about, it's all nonsense! —I heard, somewhere or other, that a brother of Mrs. Willoughby's is going out as chaplain to X——, and I suppose this is the man; so, of course, that alone would prevent it."

"Poor fellow! I'll go and tell him," said Clapton, "for fear it should spoil his luncheon."

CHAPTER XII.

“ I MUST go up to town again this morning, I find,” said Latimer, addressing Adelaide and his sister, who were sitting at work in the little breakfast-room ; the windows of which, opening to the ground, admitted the fresh, spring breeze ; “ Craig writes me word that he must see me again before he concludes the settlements.—Fetch

your bonnet, Adelaide, and come with me down to the gate ; the coach will pass in a quarter of an hour—so make haste, like a good little girl.”

Adelaide flew to put on her walking gear, and soon returned.

She had put off her mourning at Latimer's earnest request, for the first time this day since her father's death ; and he thought he had never seen her look so lovely as she did at this moment. Over her pretty muslin dress, she wore one of those black scarfs of rich silk, which were then just coming into fashion ; and her little straw bonnet, with its pretty ribbon, and bunches of violets, clustering amongst her sunny curls, was very becoming ; added to which, the little excitement caused by putting on these new

things for the first time—an excitement to which few women are quite insensible—gave a bloom to her cheek, and a lustre to her eyes, even brighter than usual.

“Your new bonnet is very becoming, Adelaide,” said Mrs. Willoughby.

“Do you know I hardly know myself in colours,” replied she. “I hope I am the same person.—What do you think, Charles? You look very grave.—What is it that does not please you?—This? or this? or this?” touching as she spoke the different articles of her attire.

“Oh, no,” said he, “I like every thing you have on,—I think it all very pretty; but I was thinking——.”

“I am sure,” said his sister, “you cannot think that Adelaide does not look so well

as in her former dress. She always looks well in whatever dress she puts on, but certainly I never saw her look so well before."

"I shall be late for the coach," exclaimed Latimer, glancing at the clock. "Are you ready, Adey?"

"I am only waiting for you," she replied; and they both went out together.

"Do tell me, dear Charles," said Adelaide, when they had walked on several paces, in unusual silence, "is any thing the matter? Has any thing annoyed you?"

"No, love;—at least——," he hesitated.

"But something has, though; so out with it; make a frank confession."

"Well, then, Adelaide, I am again tormented with a thought that *will* occa-

sionally rise to my mind ; a thought which I do not feel sure I *ought* to endeavour to banish.”

“ This thought,—what is it ? ” asked Adelaide.

“ It is, my love, that I am doing wrong in taking you to this wretched place,—that I am selfish in accepting the sacrifice which you so generously make. I am afraid that you will not be happy, that——. Oh, Adelaide ! ” he exclaimed, in a voice of anguish, “ if you regret our engagement,—if, for one instant, you repent of what you are about to do,—tell me, before it is too late,—before you seal irrevocably a fate, which, in that case, must be miserable ! ”

“ Charles ! indeed I do not,—I never

have,—I never can, regret it. What leads you to suppose so ?”

“ Ah, Adelaide ! when I look upon you, and then at myself——. Perhaps the disparity never struck me so forcibly as to-day.”

“ Now, Charles, I am half inclined to be angry with you ! Do you think really that I can care for such nonsense as that ? Besides, your opinion of yourself is just as much too low, as your opinion of me is too high ; and were I as transcendently lovely as any princess in a fairy tale, and you as hideous as a gnome, I should have done as I have done.—But indeed you distress me by your want of faith ; will nothing convince you of my attachment ?”

“ Yes, Adelaide ; I feel I am very wrong

to doubt it ; but at times this thought will obtrude ;—I think of the Kynnastons, and I feel miserable.”

“ But what comparison is there between the two cases ?—Geraldine loved another than her husband when she married.”

“ She *thought* she did not,” said Latimer.

“ Nay,” said Adelaide, “ if you doubt my assurances ; if you do not believe in what I have told you, I am not surprised that you should feel uneasy ;” and she withdrew her arm from his.

“ It is not that I do not believe you, my life !” he exclaimed, recapturing the half-reluctant hand ; “ you must not feel offended with me, Adelaide ; indeed you must not.”

“ But I cannot help feeling hurt, Charles.

You say that you believe me, and yet you make yourself miserable by distrusting me.—I do not see how both are compatible.”

“ My own dearest !—It is not that I fear for one moment that you would deceive *me* ;—it is, that I am afraid you may be deceiving *yourself*.”

“ Oh, Latimer !”

“ Listen, Adelaide !”

He fixed his eyes upon her countenance as he said,

“ I saw the announcement of an arrival in the papers this morning.”

“ Whose ?—I cannot think of any arrival that should interest us.—Do not look at me so, Charles, you frighten me !”

“ Cannot you, indeed, think of any arrival that might interest you ?”

“Do tell me at once.—How mysterious you are this morning!” exclaimed Adelaide, half laughing, half frightened by his peculiar manner.

His eyes were still bent upon her, as if he would read her very soul, while he slowly uttered the words,—

“Captain Mostyn,—from the West Indies.”

Adelaide changed colour at this unexpected intelligence, and her eyes avoided his searching gaze, and sought the ground.

At that very instant the coach was heard approaching. Latimer relinquished her arm with almost a groan; sprung forwards to secure his place; and in two minutes was out of sight.

Adelaide remained standing on the spot

where he had left her, till the sound of the rapidly retreating wheels was lost in the distance. She then slowly returned to the house.

Latimer, in the mean while, was continuing his journey almost in a state of distraction. He attributed her changing colour, her silence, and her averted eyes, to a return of feelings, excited by his intelligence, which she had deceived herself into believing were quenched for ever. His imagination pictured to him Mostyn, with all his powers of charm and fascination, throwing himself again at Adelaide's feet,—for, for what other purpose could he have returned to England? and again urging her to accept his hand. Adelaide, torn between her preference for him, and her sense of honour, which bound her

to another; longing for a freedom she would be too generous to assert.—And should he refuse it her? Should he expose her, and himself to a life of misery? To such an existence as the Kynnastons had led?—Their history glared like a beacon before him. Could he resist its warning?

“Oh, no!” he mentally exclaimed, and shudderingly concealed his face in his hands. “My Adelaide! you are lost to me for ever!”

“Would you wish this window drawn up, Sir?” asked a gentleman who was seated opposite to him, and who was looking over a bundle of papers which he held in his hand, and which were tied with business-like red tape, “you look ill; perhaps you feel it too cold?”

“ Oh, no, thank you; by no means!” exclaimed Latimer. He felt he should suffocate, if the breeze ceased to play upon his burning brow.

But the question aroused him to a consciousness of where he was, and where going. The papers which his fellow passenger held in his hand seemed to recall something to his recollection, for he searched one pocket of his coat after another, then examined those of his great-coat, which lay across his knees, but apparently in vain.

“ Have you lost any thing, Sir?” said the busy-looking little gentleman;—“ allow me,—perhaps you have dropped it at the bottom of the carriage.”

“ Oh, thank you,—do not trouble yourself,—I must have left them behind me,”

and putting his head out of the window, Latimer called to the guard to stop..

“ They are only some necessary papers, without which my journey to town will be quite in vain,” replied he in answer to the inquiring looks of his opposite neighbour.

“ Dear me!—I am very sorry.—Good day, Sir!”

“ Good morning !”

And Latimer, jumping out of the coach, set out upon his seven-miles walk home

CHAPTER XIII.

“WHERE is your mamma, Emily dear?” inquired Adelaide, opening the school-room door, where the children were at their lessons. “I have been searching for her high and low, and cannot find her.”

“Mamma is gone out; she went with papa in the carriage; but she will be back

to luncheon. She forgot something when you were in D—— the other day, and as papa was going she went with him.—Did you want her, Adelaide?”

“ Yes, I wanted to speak to her, but it will do when she comes in.”

“ Don't go, Adelaide!—stay with us ;—she will not disturb us, will she, madame ?” appealing to her governess.

“ Yes, I shall very much, dear ;—besides, I am going into the breakfast-room to write letters,” and she left the room. Adelaide had several letters to write ;—to Mr. Brown, who had left Bury Hill a few days before ;—to her grandmother ; and a volume to Lady Kynnaston.

She had just concluded this last when she heard a ring at the door-bell. She looked

at the clock on the chimney-piece ; it was half-past twelve.

“ Sophia is come back much sooner than she expected,” thought she.

And folding her letters, she proceeded leisurely to seal them. The door opened,—

“ Captain Mostyn,” announced the servant, and admitting him, closed the door and withdrew.

The wax dropped from Adelaide’s hand, as she turned round with a start at this unexpected, but well-known name. Her cheek grew crimson ; but there was something in her manner which checked the exclamation which was upon Mostyn’s lips, as he hurried forwards and caught her hand in his.

She returned its greeting, and then sitting

down, for she trembled so much, that she was afraid he would perceive her agitation : she motioned him to a chair.

“ Mrs. Willoughby is out,” she said, in a voice which, by a violent effort, she succeeded in rendering calm. “ She will be very sorry to miss you, for I am afraid she will not be back just yet.”

Mostyn did not, or would not, notice the hint.

“ I have only just returned from the West Indies,” said he ; “ and have lost no time in making my way to Bury Hill. I can never forget Mrs. Willoughby’s hospitality and kindness to me,—nor have I ever forgotten those happy weeks I spent here last summer.”

He looked at Adelaide as he said these

last words with great emphasis, but she was examining the tassel of her apron-string.

“ You have returned sooner than you expected from the West Indies, have you not ?” said she, her eyes still fixed upon this tassel.

“ Yes, much sooner.”

“ I am very sorry you have been ill,” said Adelaide, raising her eyes calmly to his face ; but he looked so well, so handsome, and his dark eyes met her glance with an expression so full of tenderness and reproach, at the almost indifferent tone in which she had spoken these last words, that Adelaide again averted her’s, saying, with a smile,—

“ I do not think that your friends have any need to be alarmed upon your account, however.—You do not look as if you had

been in any very great danger.—I am sure Mrs. Willoughby will be glad to see you. I will inquire if she has returned. Visitors are not generally received in this room, and she may not be aware of your visit to her.”

She rose to leave the room ; but Mostyn, springing up at the same time, detained her, saying ;

“I will wait for her—I am in no hurry. The servant told me she was out; and upon my inquiring for you, admitted me here, where he said you were sitting.—He will let her know when she returns.—You cannot think that I came to see *her* only ?”

“Frederick is at Sandhurst,” said Adelaide ; who felt every moment more embarrassed ; and who would have given worlds

to have made her escape ; “but I will fetch the girls—they will be very glad to see you.” And she again made a move towards the door.

“Stay, Adelaide!” exclaimed Mostyn. “No more of this, I entreat you.—I have so much to say to you.—Are you sorry to see me, then, that you are in such haste to leave me? You *cannot* misunderstand the purpose of my visit!”

“I cannot *understand* it,” said Adelaide, looking exceedingly annoyed. “Allow me to”

“You *cannot understand* me, Adelaide?” asked he. “I see what it is—you think that I have not deserved that you should understand me!—But does, then, my crime lie indeed beyond the power of your forgive-

ness?—Is it so deadly?—or are you so implacable?”

“Captain Mostyn,” said she, very gravely, “forgiveness is long out of date.—I have ceased to remember.”

“Adelaide, you are barbarous!” exclaimed he. “Most barbarous!—I have hardly deserved this treatment at your hands.—Nay, you shall hear me!” as he interposed between her and the door, which she again attempted to reach.

“Let me go, Captain Mostyn!—I entreat you will let me go!—Mrs. Willoughby will tell you all.”

“What can Mrs. Willoughby have to tell me,” said he gently, “that can have any thing to do with what I have to say to you? Let me detain you for five minutes—for

five minutes only, Adelaide, and then you shall go, if you please."

There was a sparklè of triumph in his eye, as he said these last words, which seemed to betray little doubt of her remaining ; but seeing that she still looked uneasy, he added,

"I have nothing to say that will annoy you, I hope. I am sure you must be labouring under some mistake."

Considerably relieved by this assurance, Adelaide moved from the door to her former seat, only requesting him to tell her immediately what he had to say.

"My circumstances are greatly altered since I parted from you last year," he began, as he stood before her, his hand supported on the table near him, and playing with the

sealing-wax which lay within its reach. "A near relation is deceased, and has left me all her property. I got leave to return home under the pretext of attending to my affairs.—But, Adelaide, there was an affair which lay nearer to my heart than this property—an affair in which, if I am unsuccessful, wealth and estates can afford me no pleasure ; and life, with all these means of enjoyment at my disposal, will prove a blank.—You rejected my hand when last I offered it to you, Adelaide.—Your reason was noble—worthy of you. I appreciated it, and loved you more than ever—nay, hear me!" as she rose, and attempted to interrupt him. "I loved you more than ever! And now that plea can no longer serve you! Now you can no longer doubt an affection

which has brought me back to England, solely for the purpose of asking you to share a fortune which I cannot enjoy without you. —Adelaide—dearest Adelaide!—prove to me that you have forgiven the offence without forgetting the offender, and accept the hand which I again offer to you, with all the love!—the devotion!”

“Stop, Captain Mostyn!” exclaimed Adelaide, as he made a move towards her, as if about to take her hand, while his dark eyes seemed absolutely melting in tenderness, “I cannot, I—must not hear you, even if I would—I am no longer free.”

“You cannot!—Must not!—Not free! —What do you mean?—What impediment can there be betwixt us?”

She made no reply, but looked much distressed ; and he continued vehemently :

“ You do not mean to say that you are engaged to another ?—Oh no, Adelaide !—tell me this is not true.”

“ It *is* true !” she said, in a voice low, but perfectly distinct.

“ And you can tell me this so calmly !—

“ Adelaide, I do not believe you !—I do not believe in that cold, cold manner !—You loved me—you cannot deny that you loved me—and you have *not* so soon forgotten me !—I will not give you up !—You were mine—mine first !”

“ Captain Mostyn !—Do not !—You have no right !—It is by my own free will that I am engaged.” She could with difficulty maintain her composure.

“Who,—who is my rival?” demanded he with increasing vehemence.

“I am engaged to Mr. Latimer.”

“It *is* true then what I heard!—Mr. Latimer!—I see it all now! It is Mrs. Willoughby’s doing—I know you must have been compelled—tormented into it!—But give it up, Adelaide! What claim can such pretensions as his have upon you, in comparison to those of your first attachment—your own choice?—Was I not your choice?”

He passionately seized her hand, as he spoke, and clasped it so firmly in both his own, as his imploring eyes were fixed upon her face, that she found it impossible to withdraw it.

At that moment the window was darkened by a shadow, which in the next had

passed away ; but they neither of them observed it.

“ Let me go, Captain Mostyn !—You have no right to detain me !” exclaimed Adelaide, striving in vain to free her hand.

“ Say then that you will give up this mad—this preposterous engagement. Promise me !—Oh, Adelaide, could you not wait ?— Was this your love for me ?— Promise !”

“ I have not wronged you.—I never thought to see you again.—I considered every thing, for ever, over between us.—I do not *wish* to break my engagement with Mr. Latimer.”

“ You do not *wish* to release yourself from your engagement ?”

“ Let go my hand, Captain Mostyn !—

I will *not* promise—Cannot you understand?”

“Cold-hearted girl!” cried he, as he flung her hand from him. “I *do* understand you. I remember—Mr. Latimer—He was not a *poor* Captain in the army!”

“No! He is the Chaplain of X——,” said Adelaide, indignantly.

“Good Heavens!—What can be the inducement?—Ah, Adelaide! forgive me!—I did not know what I said!—I see now what it is,” he continued, with an air of deep dejection. “You think that I am unworthy of you!—that it was your duty to forget me. But try me once more, once more, Adelaide! I am no longer what I was. An affection the deepest I ever knew, has cured me of my former follies—has taught

me how to love. Adelaide! Adelaide! do not reject the heart which you have made!" and he threw himself at her feet.

"Oh, Captain Mostyn!" said Adelaide in great agitation. "Do not, I entreat you.— Rise this moment!—It is true what you have just said. I *had* ceased to love you.— It was my duty. And now it is too late!— Go, go!—Mr. Willoughby will be coming home!—It will make him so unhappy if he knows that you have been here."

"Better that one should be miserable for a little while than two for life. Adelaide, dearest! It is not too late! Only be courageous! only dare the opinion of the world! What does it signify?—Besides, all will acquit you! Who can blame your returning to him who first won your affec-

tions? Speak! Say you will relinquish your unfortunate engagement!" he urged almost impatiently.

"Cannot you understand?" she replied. "Must I speak still plainer?—I *love* Mr. Latimer." Her whole face grew crimson.

"Say it again!" fixing his eyes full upon her. "I cannot believe you!"

"Then hear me, Captain Mostyn!—I loved you once—how deeply! and when I discovered that you were both undesirous and undeserving of such an affection, and that it became my wish as well as my duty to quench it for ever,—I felt—that I could never love again."

She paused.

"Well!" cried he.

"But Mr. Latimer has shown me an affec-

tion!—Oh! an affection, so generous! so devoted!—He loves me!—I am as life itself to him!—And, shall I be so ungrateful as to forsake him? Shall I break that noble heart? No, no!—I loved you more than you deserved. Charles, I well know I can not love as he deserves—but all I have to bestow is his—his now—his for ever!”

“Answer me one question,” said Mostyn in a low tone, his searching gaze again fixed upon her countenance, “If you had been free,—if you had not been bound by these ties of *gratitude*, would you have received me as you have to-day?”

“Go, go this moment!—I will not answer you!—By what right, sir?—I will not hear another word!”

“Adelaide! you dare not say, ‘yes!’”

cried he, his eyes flashing with triumph. You are mine,—my own,—my own! Break off this miserable engagement! My Adelaide!”

“No power on earth shall induce me!” cried she, freeing herself from the grasp which sought in vain to detain her, and escaping to the door, she opened it and fled from the room.

CHAPTER XIV.

ADELAIDE paused not till she reached her own door; and then locking it after her, as if fearful of pursuit,—and wild and breathless with excitement, she flung herself on the floor at the foot of the bed, buried her face in its coverings, and pressed her hands against her ears, as if by these actions she would shut out from her remembrance

the words and the scene which had just passed.

But still his last assertion rang in her ears; still she saw before her the passionately pleading countenance of him whom she had once so dearly loved. She endeavoured to stun the recollection by repeating to herself aloud that she no longer cared for him, that he was nothing to her now, and by evoking the name of Charles, as if its sound, acting like a talisman, would have the power to drive away the thoughts which almost distracted her.

“Would she have received him as she had done, if she had been free?”

Again that question stole into her mind; but she shook it from her as she would have

done a serpent. Why try to answer it, since free she was not?

As for endeavouring to render herself so, the idea never once presented itself to her mind. Such cruel ingratitude she was incapable of contemplating for a moment. It was to persuade herself how little cause she had to *regret* her engagement, that she recalled all Latimer's unequalled virtue, all his tenderness, kindness, un-selfish devotion for herself; contrasting it with that of Mostyn, so egotistical, so assured of victory. Perhaps she was unjust to Mostyn. She *dared* not look upon his conduct with indulgence. She *dared* not think of the constancy which had brought him again to her feet, or pity the disappointment which pained him so bitterly. She must throw his

remembrance into dark night, and cast all the light upon Latimer. Candour was not the virtue she was here called upon to exercise.

Just at this moment something fell to the ground with a ringing sound. It was a bracelet which Latimer had fastened upon her wrist the evening before, with words which she could never forget. His hair was in the locket which linked its chains together. How often is the current of the feelings changed by such a trifling incident as this!

Adelaide stooped for the ornament, and bathed it with penitent tears, as she bewailed her momentary disloyalty to its giver; and then upon her knees she implored for that strength which cometh only from above to enable her to

disperse these mists from her mind, nor give now, or ever, one thought to the past.

Composed and happy, she rose to her feet; and now her most earnest wish was for Latimer's return, that she might tell him of all that had passed, confess her momentary weakness, and assure him of how much more than ever she rejoiced in her engagement to him—to him who she felt could alone confer upon her a lasting happiness, who was alone capable of at once satisfying and elevating her mind.

But it would be some hours before he could return. Upon looking at her watch, Adelaide found it was past two o'clock. She must have been a long time in her room, and Captain Mostyn must have left the house long ago.

She stole to the head of the stairs—all was quiet. She listened still, and then she heard the dining-room door open, and voices.

Could she believe her ears! Yes, his voice,—Mostyn's! as, passing across the hall, he addressed, in an unconcerned tone, some trivial remark to Mrs. Willoughby.

She returned quickly to her own room. It looked upon the carriage drive, and she presently heard the sound of horses' feet approaching the hall-door. In a little while she heard the drawing-room-door open, and again close. There was the uncertain trampling of a horse upon the moist gravel, as if some one was mounting, succeeded by the sound of his rapid hoofs, as he dashed off at full gallop.

Adelaide looked from the window, and caught a glimpse of Mostyn's slight and graceful figure just before a turn in the drive concealed him from her sight.

Mrs. Willoughby now made her appearance.

“ I have had a visitor, Adelaide, and I was obliged to ask him to luncheon ; I did not send for you down, as I was not sure that you would care to see him. It was Captain Mostyn. He was just leaving the door when I drove up, and as he had come all this way to call, I could not avoid asking him in to luncheon. I do not think he knew that you were here ; at all events, he never mentioned your name. He told me about some fortune that has been left

him, and which occasioned his unexpected return to England."

"Indeed!" said Adelaide.

"He looked rather flushed, but seemed in very good spirits, and only to require a little encouragement on my part to make his visits here as frequent as before. I told him of your engagement to my brother, at luncheon, before all the children; I thought it the least awkward plan of announcing the intelligence to him, as if it were, as indeed it ought to be, a matter of no private interest to him. He received the news with the greatest composure, and wished you every happiness."

Adelaide felt infinitely relieved by this proof, as she considered it, of his insensibility. She proceeded to undeceive Mrs.

Willoughby, by informing her, as briefly as possible, of the interview which had taken place between them ; requesting that she would not give Latimer even a hint concerning it, till she should herself inform him of all that had occurred.

Mrs. Willoughby promised to comply with her wishes, and perceiving that she had hardly recovered the effects of her agitation, with her usual consideration, forbore to ask for any further particulars beyond those which Adelaide seemed disposed to communicate, and invited her to accompany her into the garden, where she was going to superintend the laying out of a new flower-garden.

Mostyn, meanwhile, rode back to the barracks.

Perhaps the most predominant among the many feelings to which he was a prey, though hardly acknowledged to himself, was the desire to avoid giving the slightest suspicion of his defeat to his brother officers ; and it was in obedience to this instinct rather than reason, which had dictated his conduct after Adelaide's flight. He wished to show Mrs. Willoughby, should what had just passed come to her knowledge, which he could hardly hope it would not, how slight, after all, had been his disappointment ; nor did he feel the least objection that Adelaide should be made aware of his apparent unconcern ; he flattered himself that she was, however resolute not to yield to the feeling, still in heart attached to him ; and in the irritation and excitement of the

moment, longed to revenge his own disappointment by mortifying and paining her. He had but a poor opinion of women, and hoped, also, that this very mortification might awaken her to a more lively sense of her feelings towards him, and succeed in obtaining that result which his earnest protestations, his passionate entreaties, had failed in effecting. Mostyn, perhaps, hardly gave account to himself of all these sensations, for they were more sensations than reflections, or they might have shown him how selfish, after all, was his attachment—how little deserving of Adelaide's regard, or the sacrifice of Latimer's happiness; but he was not accustomed to self-examination,—never looked to the motives which impelled him to this or to that action,

or which gave birth to this or that train of thought, and consequently could as little expect, as he in reality hoped for, self-improvement.

But besides the mortification of his rejection, he really felt much pained by his disappointment; for he loved Adelaide more than he had ever loved any woman before, as much as it was possible for a nature, with all his amiable qualities, yet so superficial as his own, to love any one. His attachment was, in fact, one of the reasons which had brought him back to England, though, perhaps, he would not have acted so hastily as he did, had not his ardour been revived by that idea of her becoming the property of another, which had been suggested by Captain Lawson's observations.

And now, leaving him to ride, talk, laugh, or dance himself out of his disappointment,—for he was invited that very night to a brilliant ball in the neighbourhood, with the rest of his brother officers,—as best suited his fancy, this story must again return to Bury Hill, where the consequences of his proceedings had not been quite so slight to the other actors as to himself.

CHAPTER XV.

“ I WONDER that Charles has not come home yet,” said Mrs. Willoughby, when the increasing dusk, and the rising mist began to warn her that it was time to leave her garden, and return indoors.

Adelaide had been wondering the same thing for the last hour to herself, as she

grew every moment more and more impatient to see him.

“Uncle Charles!” exclaimed Emily, “Why, mamma, he has been home for a long, long time.”

“At home, child!—Impossible!” said her mother. “When did you see him? At all events he *could* not have been back for more than half an hour.—You have a sad habit of exaggerating, Emy dear.”

“Indeed, mamma, I saw him in the garden, when we were playing there before luncheon—not long before you came home. I called to him to come and look at our grotto; but he made no answer, and went into the house by the glass-door.”

“How very strange!” exclaimed Mrs. Willoughby. “What could have occasioned

his sudden return? You must have been mistaken, Emily."

But Emily persisted in the correctness of her statement, while Adelaide's heart, she hardly knew why, seemed to turn cold within her.

"Has he been ill, do you think?" she said, faintly.

"Run, Emy, and see if he is in his room," said her mother.

"Oh, no, my dear Adelaide, he cannot be ill, or he would have let us know.—I dare say he thinks we are out, and has immersed himself in some book; or, he is writing, perhaps," she continued, as they walked together towards the house. But just as they reached the breakfast-room window, which still remained open, Emily came running

back to them, holding a letter in her hand, and saying,

“Mamma, uncle Charles is not in his room. It is in such a state of confusion, you can't think!—The drawers pulled out, and boots, and coats, and things lying about.—I found this letter on the dressing-table. See, Adelaide, it is for you.—Mamma, is it not strange?—Where can he be?—He must have gone somewhere!” So she ran on, while Adelaide took the letter, and sinking upon a chair in the breakfast-room, which by this time they had entered, broke the seal, with hands that trembled so, they were almost unable to effect their purpose. She turned very pale as she read, and when she had concluded she put the letter into Mrs. Willoughby's anxiously awaiting hand,

and concealed her face in her handkerchief. Mrs. Willoughby hastily read the following words :—

“ I happened to pass by the open breakfast-room window this morning—I have seen—I understand all !

“ I restore to you the freedom which, I know, you will be too kind, too generous to claim.

“ Do not think that I blame you, Adelaide ! I know that the affections are not to be compelled, and, as you once said to me in extenuation of another, ‘ He was your first.’

“ I know that you have done all that lies in your power—impelled by your tender, your compassionate nature—to return, at

least in some measure, the love I bear you,—that you *thought* that you had succeeded ;—and you *will* love me still ! though not as I, in my presumption, had begun to flatter myself—but as a brother, an elder brother—let me think so !

“ To spare the pain it would occasion us both I shall avoid seeing you again. I shall leave the house as soon as this is written ; and, that it may not be *in your power* to recall me, I shall seek a retreat which you will be unable to discover.

“ And now, Adelaide,—still dearest,—though mine no longer,—farewell ! May one more fortunate than myself afford you that happiness which would have been yours, could the most earnest wishes, and a life devoted to you, have bestowed it !

“Farewell, dearest Adelaide,—for ever!

“I shall seek for that strength, which will enable me to be thankful that the discovery did not, as in another case, arrive too late; and, that as far as you are concerned,—all is well.

“CHARLES LATIMER.”

The tears started to the sister's eyes, and she silently returned the letter to Adelaide, who starting up, exclaimed wildly,—

“Sophia! you must come with me, directly!—We must go to him!”

“Alas, my love! he does not give us the slightest hint as to where he has gone.—How can we go to him?”

“We must set out—we must do some-

thing! He is suffering, Sophia.—If you will not come with me I will go alone.”

“My love, I will come with you!—But where, where do you hope to find him?”

“At the Kynnaston’s! He will go there first! He knows that they will not betray him.” She flew to the bell, and hastily pulled the cord.

“Now, Sophia, order post-horses immediately.”

The servant appeared, and the necessary orders were given.

“We must wait till Mr. Willoughby returns, Adelaide,” said his wife. “It would not be right to leave the house so suddenly without giving him notice.”

To this it was impossible to make an objection, and Adelaide had to wait two

mortal hours, devoured with impatience, till he arrived, thinking that every minute that elapsed was one more added to the sum of Latimer's agony. All that she could do was to put up the few things she should want for her journey; to hasten Mrs. Willoughby's maid in making the same preparations for her mistress, and then putting on her bonnet and cloak—yes, even her gloves, that there might be no delay which she could avoid, pace up and down her room in a perfect fever.

At eight o'clock she heard Mr. Willoughby's well-known ring at the door, and running to Mrs. Willoughby, she entreated her to lose no time in asking his permission, and setting off. Sophia's impatience to start was only second to her own. She

met her husband in the hall, rapidly acquainted him with what had happened, and asked his permission to accompany Adelaide.

Mr. Willoughby thought it a very absurd affair altogether. Very ridiculous of Latimer leaving so suddenly, very unbusiness-like. All this fuss and trouble might have been saved if he had only behaved like a rational man, and assured himself of his facts before running off in such a hurry. However, he very good-naturedly consented to the plan, and in another ten minutes the two ladies were on their road to Edmonbury, where they arrived in the afternoon of the following day.

Adelaide, leaving Mrs. Willoughby in the

drawing-room, ran up stairs to Geraldine's sitting-room.

“Oh, Geraldine!” she cried, as she hastily entered, “Is he here?”

“Who?” exclaimed Lady Kynnas-ton, whose surprise may be imagined at this sudden and unexpected apparition.

“My dearest Adelaide, what is the matter?”

“Charles!—Charles!—Have you seen him?”

“My dear, you seem quite wild!—explain yourself.”

She made her sit down, and took off her bonnet and cloak.

“Only tell me! Have you seen Mr. Latimer?”

“No, I have not.—What does all this mean?”

“Not here!” cried Adelaide in despair. “Oh, Geraldine! he has left us!—Where is Sir Thomas?—he will discover where he has fled!”

“Only tell me what all this means, Adelaide.—Sir Thomas is out, and will not be home till dinner-time.”

A few moments sufficed to put Lady Kynnaston in possession of the events which had occurred. Adelaide was too much agitated, too much distressed, to make any hesitation in her brief recital; but that very agitation and distress convinced Lady Kynnaston how unfounded were the apprehensions which had occasioned Latimer’s departure, though she could not but too well

understand from whose history he had derived that experience which had had so much influence upon his feelings and conduct.

She accompanied Adelaide to the room where Mrs. Willoughby was sitting in great suspense, and acquainted her of her ignorance of Latimer's movements. Nothing further could now be done. They must wait till Sir Thomas should return, to consult with him what further steps should be taken. At length he came home, later, of course, than was expected. It generally happens so, when we are waiting with impatience.

His kind and affectionate nature was much grieved at the intelligence. But once convinced of the truth of Adelaide's attach-

ment, and of the sincerity of her assurances, he bade her not despair, for he would find out his friend if he had fled to the world's end.

After some consultation, it was decided that Sir Thomas should start for Oxford the following morning, and endeavour to gain some tidings of Latimer there. Should this fail, he would take up the clue from the commencement, and trace the fugitive step by step to his retreat. Latimer had taken some luggage with him at all events, and accordingly must have travelled by some conveyance. Mrs. Willoughby was to return home the following day, and set on foot such inquiries as were the most likely to lead to his discovery. Adelaide determined to remain at Edmonbury. She still

clung to the idea that there he would sooner or later make his appearance. Every time she heard a stop, or that the door-bell rang, she would start to her feet, to sink back again in disappointment, when the door would open, perhaps to admit a servant with some note or message, quite irrelevant to that subject which had possession of every thought of her mind, or in the discharge of some duties of attendance.

So that night, and so the next day passed heavily by. Sir Thomas and Mrs. Willoughby started for their several destinations. Adelaide and Lady Kynnaston were left alone.

The third day Sir Thomas returned. His journey had been fruitless. He had

learnt no tidings of Latimer. Still he bade Adelaide not despair. The next day he would go to Bury Hill, and then, in conjunction with Mrs. Willoughby, never rest till he discovered by what means and in what direction her brother had fled.

“He must be ill!” thought Adelaide—
“ill, and no one to attend to him! No one to console and comfort him! He may die! Ah, Captain Mostyn!—if you could but know what are the consequences of your conduct!”

Mostyn would have thought it very unjust that any blame should attach to him upon Latimer’s account. “The consequences were too remote to lay at his door,” he would have said. But who can say what remote consequences

shall attend upon one unprincipled action? How much less upon a *whole life* of unprincipled, though, perhaps, not exactly sinful conduct! How rightly are we warned to avoid “the least appearance of evil.”

Geraldine had already taken this lesson to her heart.

CHAPTER XVI.

“ WE can learn no further tidings to-night, dear Adelaide,” said Lady Kynnaston, entering the Blue Room upon the evening of the fourth day of suspense. “ Coxe has returned from B——. There are no letters. My love! how pale! how exhausted you look !”

She might well say so; Adelaide had

not closed her eyes for the last three nights.

“ No letter !” said Adelaide, in a voice so desponding, yet so gentle, that it went to Lady Kynnaston’s heart.

“ None ! we must now wait with patience for to-morrow. It is getting dark ; ring for the lamp, dear child, and I will finish reading that book to you ; you seemed interested in it last night.”

“ Yes,” said Adelaide, mechanically.

The lights were brought. Lady Kynnaston opened her book and began to read.

“ What was that ring ?” suddenly exclaimed Adelaide, dropping the work she held in her hands upon her lap, while her head was bent aside in a listening attitude.

“ I heard no bell,” replied Lady Kyn-

naston ; you are mistaken, dear.—Listen to this, it is so beautiful!”

But Adelaide’s eyes were fixed upon the door,—it opened,—she gave a cry, and darting forwards, clasped her arms around the figure which entered.

It was Latimer ; but he stood erect, speechless, fixed to the spot where those arms had imprisoned him ; his eye returning, with a bewildered gaze, the looks of passionate tenderness which were fixed upon him.

“ Charles ! Charles ! Speak !—It is me ! —It is Adelaide ! Do not you know me ?” cried she alarmed, almost terrified at the fixed impassibility of his gaze. “ It is your Adelaide ! your own, own Adelaide.—Your wife, Charles !—Speak, speak !”

Her tears now flowed from the eyes which were uplifted to his face ; nor did she try to stop their course, for her arms were still clasped around his figure.

This spectacle seemed to restore him to some consciousness.

“ Where am I ?” he said, in a voice so dreamy, so low, so broken with intensity of suffering, that Lady Kynnaston could no longer restrain her emotion. “ Oh, Adelaide ! do not mock me !”

He sunk into a seat ; but Adelaide still clung to him as she threw herself upon her knees at his feet, crying in a voice interrupted with sobs,—

“ Oh, Charles ! do you not yet believe me ?—What can I say, what do, to prove to you that I love you ?—I love you, Charles !

—Do you not hear me ?” —She covered his hands with kisses.

“ Say it again !” he gasped ; and then suddenly pressing his hand to his forehead, exclaimed,—

“ Oh, my head !” and fell back senseless in the chair.

To spring to her feet, and support the drooping head upon her bosom, while she screamed to Lady Kynnaston to come to her assistance, was the work of a second. They bathed his burning temples with Eau de Cologne, wheeled the chair to the window, which Lady Kynnaston tore rather than pulled open, but no signs of returning consciousness succeeded to their efforts.

“ Ring, ring !” cried Adelaide ;—“ send for advice,—quick, quick !”

Lady Kynnaston instantly obeyed her,—the hasty summons was as instantly answered, and in another five minutes a servant on horseback rode off full speed for the nearest assistance.

What a century it seemed to the arrival of the physician! Latimer's quick pulse alone gave assurance of life. His eyes were fast closed, and his countenance flushed with a dark crimson. The doctor ordered that he should be immediately carried to bed. Bleeding restored animation, but not consciousness. Latimer awakened from his swoon in a paroxysm of delirium;—brain fever had commenced.

Again Adelaide was a witness to this most affecting disorder, delirium. So much the more trying than her first experience, as

she loved the patient more. She watched him day and night, suffering all the agonies of suspense, for Latimer's life was twice despaired of. The reversion of feeling which he had undergone for the last two or three months might well have occasioned a fatal result.

But Adelaide was spared this affliction. The disease took a favourable turn. — Latimer was pronounced out of danger.

Who can describe the rapture which filled his heart, when with returning consciousness he gradually became aware of what had occurred. The fact of Adelaide's presence, of her tender care for him in his illness, of the mistake which had occasioned him so much useless misery—all this he

was cautiously acquainted with, for any sudden emotion must still be avoided ; but the intelligence and his Adelaide's soft eyes completed his cure.

CHAPTER XVII.

IT was in Clara's school-room, that pretty room to which we have been already introduced; but there was no fire now; the windows were wide open, admitting the soft balmy air, the joyful carol of the black-bird, and the melodious song of the thrush. The gardener was whetting his scythe upon the fragrant, still dewy, lawn, all

sounds and scents betokened the life-awaking spring.

In a large chair before the window, Latimer rather reclined than sat, and perched upon its ponderous arm was Adelaide. She held one of his hands in hers, his other arm encircled her waist. He looked pale and thin, but, oh! so happy! as her soft, pleasant voice read aloud to him from his favourite "Excursion."

At length she laid down the book, which evidently had not been very much engaging her attention for the last few moments, saying with the little sauciness of a spoilt child,

"I won't read any more now. We have got into a dull part, and I am tired."

"Don't you like it, then?"

"Oh, of course! Indeed, if I did not, I

dare not say it.—But it looks so inviting in the garden. If you will not talk, Charles, I shall run away and leave you !”

“ No, no,” and the encircling arm made itself more forcibly to be felt.

“ I cannot spare you—I have not been attending to your reading either.—I have been thinking, Adelaide.”

“ Been thinking !—have you ? Tell me what about, or do not ask me to read to you again.”

“ This day was fixed for our wedding, my dearest !—Do not you remember ?”

“ I do. And whose fault was it,” said she, looking affectionately into his eyes, “ that the fatal event is not taking place ?”

“ Mine, love ; or rather that of circum-

stance.—Ah, Adelaide! Could I have acted differently?”

“Yes; you might have trusted me.—I would have trusted *you*, Charles.”

“My love, our cases are so different! I could never have met with a temptation even to change. Where should I have found another Adelaide?”

“And you knew that I had once thought of another besides Charles,” said she, looking down.

“Yes, love, and that as far as external advantages, and amiable qualities went, you had no reason to be ashamed of your first preference.”

“Charles, how generous you are!” exclaimed Adelaide, stooping to kiss the hand which lay within hers. “But let us never

talk more of that.—I want to know what you intended to do when you ran away from us ; and how you could find in your heart to leave me without speaking to me once more.”

“ I dared not !—I thought that you would insist upon fulfilling your engagement to me at any cost to yourself ; and that if I saw you again, my own resolution might give way, and your happiness be wrecked for ever.—Ah, my darling ! I feel grateful now for that event, which I imagined was the death-blow to my happiness.—If it had not taken place, that meeting, I mean—if the truth of your own persuasions had not been tested by it—if the sincerity of your affection to me had not been proved by your subsequent conduct, beyond the power of

the most distrustful, let me rather say, the most *diffident*, to doubt ; I never could have felt so certain, so sure, so confident of my loved one's affection as I do now." He drew her still more closely towards him, till her head rested upon his shoulder.

"You will never, never doubt me again, Charles?—You promise?"

"Yes, my own, own Adelaide ! I promise—Never !"

"Then listen to a little confession I have to make to you. I had resolved that I would not make it till I was yours—yours, beyond your power to forsake again.—But now that you tell me how convinced you are of the truth—the *truth*, dear Charles—I will tell you, that when I saw him again so suddenly, so unexpectedly—when I discovered

how he still loved me, and repented of his former conduct, and wished me, so much, to forget all but my former affection for him—when he seemed so distressed to find that it was too late, I felt, Charles,” she nestled her head still closer upon his shoulder, “I felt, that perhaps, he had—*only come too late*—Don’t speak,” for he hastily moved in his chair, “I will not hear a word till I have told you all!—But never once did it cross my mind to give you up.—Ah, Charles! I knew how you loved me! I could not have done it!—And when I left him and went to my own room, and there in silence and alone, compared the characters of my *husband*, and him I had once so——him I had once thought so much about,—ah, Charles! I did not *then* regret that he had

come too late!—And when I found you had gone—left me—given up your happiness so unreservedly! so generously! to secure, as you thought, mine,—I felt that *he* would not have acted so nobly!—Perhaps not many *could* have done so—and I loved you more, oh! so much more than ever!—And then came your illness, that terrible illness, of which I was the cause!—and then more than ever was revealed the strength of your attachment; for in your delirium your heart was “poured forth like water”;—And then you were in danger: we thought you would have died! and *I* should have killed you!” She stopped, and concealed her face in his breast for a moment, while he bent down his head, and tenderly kissed that silken wavy hair.

“Would you have been sorry, love?” asked he,—so tenderly!

“Ah, Charles! then I felt, I must have died too! Then I felt you were so necessary to me, so much a part of myself, that I thought that I had never loved *you* before,—nor, nor—any one!”

“My own! My dearest, dearest life!” he cried, as he folded her to his heart, and covered her brow and cheek with kisses.

They could neither of them speak for a few moments.

At length, Adelaide, raising her head from its fond support, and drying the tears which still sparkled in her soft blue eyes, said, with a smile—

“Now I must hear your adventures; you have never told me what you intended to

do, where you went, and how you chanced to stumble upon Edmonbury, and the dragon you were flying from.”

“They are soon told, love!—When I left Bury Hill, my mind was in such a condition, that it was incapable of forming any plan; I only followed the instinct which led me to seek safety from ‘*mes dragons*,’ as you justly call them, in flight. I do not know where I went that evening. I remember I made my way into the high-road, and mounted the first coach which passed, without caring or asking whither it was going.

“At length it reached its destination—some town, but what was its name I never inquired. I passed the night at the inn where it stopped.—Such a night, Adelaide!

I began to fear for my senses.—You know, love, I have had so many revulsions of feeling lately :—From hope to despair,—from despair to assurance,—from assurance to doubt,—and from doubt to despair—despair—far, far more terrible than the first !—such sudden changes are as trying to one's psychological as to one's physical constitution, you know," said he, with a faint laugh, "and you must not think that I was very weak, and too great a fool!—However, that is all over now."

" Well, Charles, go on !"

" The next morning I felt very ill. But I could not rest where I was.—A coach was starting from the Inn-door. I inquired where it was going. To F—— they told me. I thought this quiet place would suit

me perhaps, as well as any other, till I should feel sufficiently myself again to go to town to make the necessary changes in my arrangements, previously to leaving England.

“In the evening I arrived at F—— with a racking headache, which gave me no rest night or day.—Two or three times I sat down to write to Sophia to relieve her mind about me, for I knew how anxious she would be,—but I was obliged to give up the attempt—I could not manage it!”

“You never thought of me, then?” said Adelaide.

“Alas, love! It was because I could think of nothing else that I was nearly distracted!—Well, to proceed with this interesting history.—On the night of the

third day I felt very ill.—In the morning I was worse.

“A horror then came over me that I should be laid up, perhaps die in that out-of-the-way place, without one kind friend to support and tend me, or to close my eyes; and Bury Hill being closed against me, for there I *dared* not go, not knowing whom I might meet, I resolved to set off immediately for Edmonbury. I knew I should meet with a brother’s affection from my dear friend, and with every kindness from his wife; I hoped too, that I might see you once more; that you would not refuse to come and take a last farewell.—I felt that I could then die very happily—indeed, if not wrong, I could have earnestly prayed for such a termination.”

“Dearest Charles!” His hand was kissed with almost reverence.

“I ordered a post-chaise and started a little after five that morning, and, as you know, arrived at Edmonbury late the same evening.

“I was so ill,—so exhausted with fasting,—for I had not tasted food the whole day,—that my body was as unfit as my mind to bear any sudden emotion; and when I opened the drawing-room door, and you with a shriek of joy and surprise rushed into my arms, I could not believe my senses!—There was a whirling noise in my head, as if a dozen steam-engines were at work—the whole room danced before my eyes, and I could not stand! I think you spoke to me, but I could not hear what you said. I

suppose, however, that 'you became more earnest, for at last the words 'I love you, Charles!' penetrated to my brain. Every thing around me seemed to whirl together and crash over my head, then all grew suddenly dark, and what happened afterwards, you know better than I do, darling!"

"How you must have suffered!—Dear, dear Charles!"

"It is all passed now!—we will not talk of it any more, my sweet love," said he, drying the tears which fell again from her eyes. "All has happened for the best!—And for the assurance which I now possess of your affection, willingly would I have endured a whole year of such suffering!—And now tell me, will this day week suit my gracious lady for accomplishing her destiny

and taking leave of Miss Lindsay for ever? —I have had a consultation this morning with Sophy and your cousin, and that is the day we have fixed upon, subject to your approval.—Well, what say you?”

“I say, I have nothing to do with the matter, and you may arrange it just as you like,” said she; and springing to her feet, she passed through the open window, and in the next moment was in the garden.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THAT day week Latimer and Adelaide were married.

The rite was performed at Edmonbury church. Sir Thomas had begged that it might be so, and both Adelaide and Charles gladly consented. Bury Hill was associated with much that was painful to each of them, and they wished that the wedding-bells

should be out of sound of the town of D——.

Mr. Brown gave away the bride. Clara and the little Willoughbys were made rapturously happy by being chosen to walk after her, two and two, up the aisle of the church, arrayed in white, and being called the bride's maids. Frederick elected himself Uncle Charles's groomsman.

Old Mrs. Melton was also present, and Mrs. Willoughby paid her so much attention that, quite pacified, she declared, "that if Adelaide was not going to a nice place, at all events she had married into a nice family; and surely that was the principal thing, because one *may* change one's home, but nobody *can* change their relations."

Never was a happier wedding. Not one

tear was shed upon the occasion, though Mrs. Melton tried hard to do so, as she had a vague idea that it was a necessary tribute of respect to pay to the ceremony. But no one would keep her in countenance, and all her unencouraged efforts failed in producing the desired effect.

Mr. and Mrs. Latimer's sojourn in England was necessarily so short that they had not time to get tired of each other's company at that general refuge for "happy couples," the Lakes. They spent ten days there, however, very agreeably, and the remainder of their stay in their native country was passed between Bury Hill and Edmonbury. They then sailed for their destination, which they reached without accident, and where, in the discharge of his sacred and exalted

duties, Latimer found no reason to regret his talents as thrown away ; and Adelaide every day found more reason to be convinced that it is not the place, but the man, —not the imagination, but the reason, which is the best security for happiness.

They remained many years in the settlement. Latimer's endeavours, though of course he met with many harassing disappointments, were still, on the whole, crowned with success, and many were the dark, and ignorant, and perverted minds who turned to the true light, and were again restored to society, blessing the hour which had brought Latimer and Adelaide amongst them.

At length, for some reason or another, the settlement was given up. Latimer's services were no longer required, and he

returned with his family to England, just at the time when it became necessary for his children's education that they should no longer remain in such a neighbourhood.

It may be imagined with what joy they were received by the Willoughbys and Kynnastons. Old Mrs. Melton and Mr. Brown had both been many years dead.

Frederick had grown up a fine young man. The intimacy between his family and that of Sir Thomas Kynnaston had increased year by year ; and it was whispered would soon be cemented by a closer bond than that of friendship. Clara had grown up an interesting-looking girl, though not pretty to any eyes but those of Frederick ; but she possessed other qualities far

more valuable, and was the joy and delight of both her parents.

It may interest some readers—should these pages ever chance to meet with any—to know what became of Claude Mostyn.

We have said that he managed to survive the disappointment which Adelaide's rejection had occasioned him. But the lesson had not been quite lost upon him. On his return to the West Indies he caught the fever. The prospect of death, inevitable death—death, from which there can be no return to amend those errors of the past, which in the clear atmosphere of the confines of life, appear so tremendous! so condemning!—awoke him to a sense of the vanity of the existence he had led upon

earth. Oh! how fervently did he implore that he might yet be spared a little while, "before he went hence and be no more seen!"

His prayer was granted; and he recovered almost by miracle.

In his illness, and now in his recovery, one face was always present to his memory. It was not Adelaide's, but that of one he had known long before he had met with her. One to whom his confidences had first been made; one at whose feet he had first sighed; one who he knew had given him all her heart; one who he knew had never recovered his desertion. This sweet, tenderly reproachful, yet compassionate face, appeared to him to hover round his bed in his sickness; and it was

the thought of his cruelty and treachery to this, his first love, that was, perhaps, the bitterest drop in the remorse of his retrospection.

As soon as he was sufficiently strong to bear the voyage, he returned to England upon sick leave, and was soon in his mother's arms. Almost his first inquiry was for Ursula. She was at her home, but a mile distant, and still unmarried.

“And has never been the same, since you first went from home after getting your commission, Claude,” said his mother.

: Claude knew it but too well.

In a short time, however, every one was wondering what had happened to Ursula Cunningham! She was getting her colour quite back again, and really looked

nearly as handsome as when first she came out.

A few short words had effected this change.

“Ursula, can you forgive me?”

“Ah, Claude!—How could you forget me?”

It was the only reproach she made him. He had returned to her; and her gentle idolizing heart felt so grateful that it forgot there had been a past to overlook.

Mostyn left the army, made a very kind husband, was as popular as ever, and beloved by all his dependants upon his little property. At forty he was quite the family man; robust, florid, fond of hunting and of a good dinner. It was not probable that he could have become any thing much more;

and had he and Latimer again chanced to meet, the contrast between them would have been as forcible, as when it struck Adelaide in the drawing-room at Bury Hill, the first evening of their acquaintance. But this time the contrast would have been all in Latimer's favour.

THE END.

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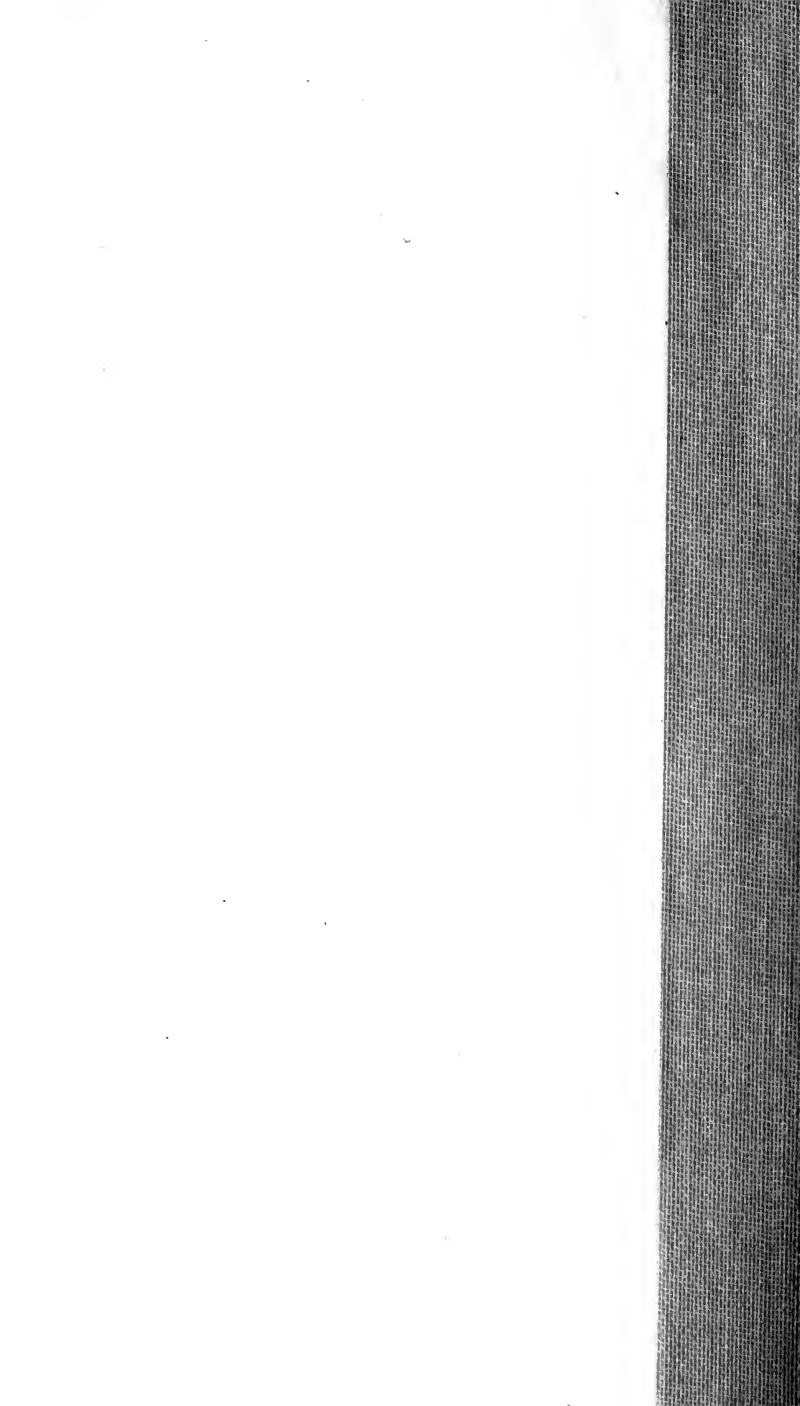
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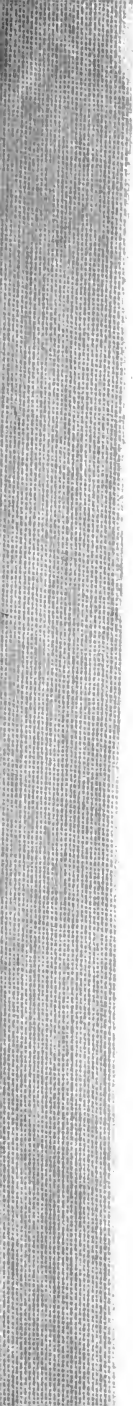
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